



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Br 12075.55.3

Tuke. A visit to Connaught in
the autumn of 1847. 1848

Br 12075, 55.3

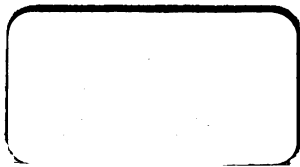
Harvard College Library



**BOUGHT FROM THE
ANDREW PRESTON PEABODY
FUND**



**BEQUEATHED BY
CAROLINE EUSTIS PEABODY
OF CAMBRIDGE**







1831
A VISIT
TO
CONNUGHT

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1847.

A LETTER ADDRESSED

TO THE CENTRAL RELIEF COMMITTEE OF THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, DUBLIN,

BY

JAMES H. TUKE.

Second Edition.

WITH NOTES OF A SUBSEQUENT VISIT TO ERRIS.

LONDON:
CHARLES GILPIN, BISHOPSGATE STREET WITHOUT.
YORK: JOHN L. LINNEY, LOW OUSEGATE.
1848.

Br 12075.55.3
✓

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM THE
ANDREW FRISTON FLABODY
FUND

February 3, 1942

ADVERTISEMENT.

REPRESENTATIONS made to me respecting some of the statements in the former edition of this pamphlet, induced me personally to re-investigate the occurrences referred to. This second visit, whilst it has enabled me to correct some particulars, has served essentially to confirm my previous statements of the condition of Ireland and of the evils which appear to be among the radical causes of her misery, and I trust that the careful revision which the pamphlet has undergone, together with the additional information obtained during the recent visit, will entitle it to the confidence of the public, and will render this edition more worthy of the attention of those who kindly expressed their approbation of the former.

York, 3rd mo. 8, 1848.

A LETTER,

&c.

WHEN I had the pleasure of meeting you, a few weeks ago, in Dublin, on my return from a journey through a considerable portion of Ireland, you expressed a wish that I should communicate to you the result of my observations on the condition of those parts of the country which I had visited, and their prospects during the coming winter. To gain information on these points, and to ascertain the working of the new poor-law, and the probability of its being brought into efficient action in the worst districts of Ireland, were the chief objects of this tour. I thought these objects would be most effectually attained by devoting my attention chiefly to Connaught; and accordingly, though I visited several other districts, my time was mostly passed in that western province.

This province being, as a whole, by far the poorest and most destitute in Ireland, I thought that it was most important to ascertain particularly its condition and prospects. If Connaught could be effectually raised in the scale of society, many would cease to despair of the future elevation of Ireland in general. I cannot suppose that the views which I have taken, and which I have ventured to express in the course of this letter, will be of value to you, who are so well acquainted with the state of Ireland; but I hope that in an emergency like the present, it may not be deemed wholly impertinent to throw into the general treasury a few imper-

fect suggestions as to the means by which some, at least, of the miseries of Ireland may be alleviated or removed.

Few things have struck me more since I have become personally acquainted with Ireland, than the very inadequate knowledge which prevails among my countrymen generally, of the great variety in the circumstances and condition of the people, which is found throughout that country. The North and East indeed, are generally distinguished from the other parts, but that these differ among themselves as much as the North differs from the South, seems to be generally overlooked. All of these are considered by many persons as equally the seats of poverty and violence. The horrible outrages of Tipperary and Roscommon are often charged alike upon the more peaceable inhabitants of Donegal and Mayo. I believe that you will agree with me, that Ireland, to be understood, must be considered in its separate parts.

Before proceeding to the particular notice of Connaught, I would venture to express my sincere satisfaction in the recent measure of Parliament, by which the long debated question, as to whether the property of the country should be chargeable with the support of the poor, is decided. At the same time, the question, whether the wants of the poor can immediately be thus provided for, cannot, I believe, be answered by a simple affirmative or negative. Before replying to it, we must divide Ireland into two great portions, and consider the question with reference to them, separately. The first portion would include the county of Donegal, the province of Connaught, comprising Leitrim, Roscommon, Sligo, Mayo and Galway, and the greater portion of Clare, Limerick, Kerry and Cork, which may be considered as embracing three millions of the population: the other—including the remaining districts of Ireland,—with a population of about five millions. In each of these divisions there may be districts which do not belong to the class in which they are placed, but generally speaking it may be considered, that there is, in the second division, sufficient wealth to meet the claims of the Poor-Law, particularly after so abundant a harvest as the past. The chief difficulty appears to arise from the reluctance of the proprietors and occupiers of land to carry out, in good faith, the provisions of the act.

With respect to the larger portion of the first division, it does appear very doubtful whether there exists either the wealth or the necessary machinery for the carrying out of

this law; and it will doubtless be to this division that your attention, as the administrators of relief, will be principally directed during the approaching season of renewed suffering and misery. A very large portion of this suffering will be found among the wretched inhabitants of Connaught.

As this letter may probably fall into the hands of some persons who are less acquainted than yourselves with the statistics of Ireland, it may be well to state, that Connaught contains an area of 4,392,043 acres, with a population, in 1841, of 1,418,859; the net annual value, according to the Poor-Law valuation, being £1,465,642 17s. 6d., and the province is divided into 19 Unions. Leinster, with a population and area but little larger, is valued at £4,624,341 15s. 4d., and is divided into 33 Unions. A consideration of these facts, coupled with the circumstance that considerably more than half of the population of Connaught reside in mud cabins of the worst description, with only one room, and that there are 67,000 labourers with little or no employment, exhibit strongly its general poverty. By the report of Lord Devon's Commission, it appears that there are in this province 1,906,000 acres (nearly half the whole) of unimproved or waste land, of which 1,156,000 might be drained and reclaimed for cultivation or pasturage, leaving 750,000 acres considered incapable of improvement at a remunerative cost. And let it not be supposed that the other half of the province, described as cultivated, is so in the sense which that term implies in Dublin or England: a well-cultivated farm is as rare in Connaught as the reverse is in the county of Lincoln or in the Lothians of Scotland. Here and there amid the wilderness of waste land and half-cultivated farms, the eye is gladdened with one, which would be creditable in England, rendering doubly painful the contrast which the desolate and weed-choked fields around it present. Galway and Mayo, the two largest counties in the province, contain 1,500,000 acres of unimproved land, nearly two-thirds of which is capable of profitable reclamation. Of this district, the report above alluded to remarks, "That it contains a larger extent of unimproved waste land than any other portion of Ireland, yet a large portion of it presents unusual facilities for reclamation and cultivation, particularly in the baronies of Erris, Burrishoole, Ross, Ballinahinch, &c., which being partly situated on the west coast, can procure manure in abundance." Here and there, especially in Gal-

way, I was cheered by noticing considerable agricultural operations in progress: in Connemara, upon an extensive estate recently purchased, the owner by giving long leases, and offering his land at moderate rents, has induced several wealthy farmers from Scotland, England, and other parts of Ireland to settle upon it, and they are rapidly converting a dreary wilderness into fruitful fields. A large portion of this estate is what is termed bog land, easily drained and improved, and producing large crops of corn, turnips, wurzel, or parsnips. I never remember to have seen more abundant or more magnificent green crops than on some patches of land which had apparently been newly reclaimed from the bog. From 1s. to 2s. 6d. per acre is the rent obtained, with a long lease, for the farms (or rather for the large uncultivated tracts marked out for such), on this estate, comparatively few of which are yet occupied. From the little knowledge of farming which I possess, I do not hesitate to express a belief, that to an enterprising farmer of capital these wastes of Connemara offer a highly profitable investment. The security of life is as great here as in England.

The cultivated land in Connaught is generally divided into very small farms. In Mayo it is so minutely divided, that out of about 46,000 farms, 44,000 are under 15 acres, and held by men too poor to employ any hired labourers. It must always be remembered how much the division of land in many parts of Ireland, has been promoted by the landlords to increase their own political influence. Throughout Mayo and Galway (especially the former) there is a very considerable portion of land left waste and uncultivated, which in other years had produced crops. This is no doubt in part owing to the decrease in the population, which is much more perceptible than I had anticipated; the inmates of whole villages have been swept away, and in Mayo alone the diminution of the population, by death or emigration, is estimated by many persons at 100,000, or one quarter of the whole. Mayo, it is well known, is the county of all others, which has furnished England each year with the largest proportion of Irish reapers; and it is also from this district that a very large proportion of the crowd of wretched paupers came, who, during the past year have added so heavily to our poor rates, and spread fever throughout England. Not, indeed, that I blame them for coming. Had they quietly remained in Ireland, to die of starvation, the usual

charge of "helplessness" would have been more properly applied to them.

Throughout the province of Connaught, the total quantity of corn and green crops is very small, compared with the wants of the population; and in Galway and Mayo especially, it seemed to be the common opinion that not more than a three months' supply existed. And so great is the present dearth of food among the poorest classes, and the consequent insecurity of the crops, that in almost every field of turnips or potatoes worth protecting, a hut is erected for the accommodation of a watcher. Potatoes were generally scarce, and selling at a famine price, though many persons were hastening the sale of their stock, as the disease had made its appearance. In some places the crops of mangel wurzel and turnips were really good; but, in general, owing to the entire ignorance of the cultivation of the turnip, the farmers and cottiers have sown the seed like grass, and, having omitted almost all care or thinning, it has grown entirely to top, with a small taper root like the radish. Notwithstanding this, the value of the distribution of this seed can hardly be over-estimated; even the tops and scanty root of the turnip have formed the diet of thousands of poor people, many of whom would otherwise have perished, and multitudes are daily looking with anxiety to the failure even of this subsistence.* At least one-fourth of the rural population of Connaught are at present existing upon these turnips or turnip-tops, boiled with a few half-decayed potatoes; on the sea coast they eke out this miserable food with sea-weed and sand-eels. Num-

* By a return kindly furnished me by William Todhunter, who last year so energetically undertook the distribution of the green crop seeds (principally turnips), placed at the disposal of the Committee of the Society of Friends by the government, it appears, that 36,196 lb of seed were distributed to 40,903 persons, and that 9,652 acres were cultivated with these crops in various districts of Ireland.

In the county of Mayo 16,666 lb of seed were distributed by W. Todhunter, and 15,680 lb by the late Lieutenant White, making a total of 32,346 lb of seed in this impoverished county alone, by which at least 8000 acres were sown, the produce of which is estimated at 190,040 tons of food. It is probable that the whole of the land upon which it was grown would have remained untilled had it not been for this timely grant on the part of the government. The subscribers to the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends will be interested in hearing that this Committee has purchased £5000 worth of turnip-seed for distribution amongst the poorest classes during the coming spring, and that arrangements have already been entered into for its distribution.

bers are daily added to the class of turnip eaters, for the scanty supply of potatoes or of oats is rapidly diminishing. Employment the labourers of Connaught cannot obtain, although they would cheerfully work at 6d., and even less, per day. Numbers assured me that they would gladly work for their daily food, and I heard of many instances where one quart of meal was all the remuneration that able-bodied men received for their day's work. Unless some immediate steps, therefore, be taken to give remunerative employment to districts like these, I can only look forward to the coming winter as even far more fearful and more fatal than the past. One shrinks from the thought that these dreadful scenes are to be repeated. During that period, the roads in many places became as charnel-houses, and several car and coach drivers have assured me that they rarely drove anywhere without seeing dead bodies strewn along the road side, and that in the dark they had even gone over them. A gentleman told me that in the neighbourhood of Clifden, one inspector of roads had caused no less than 140 bodies to be buried, which he found scattered along the highway. In some cases, it is well known, that where all other members of a family have perished, the last survivor has earthed up the door of his miserable cabin, to prevent the ingress of pigs and dogs, and then laid himself down to die in this fearful family vault.

The soil and climate of Connaught are, generally, peculiarly suited to the growth of flax, but until the present season comparatively little attention has been paid to the cultivation of a crop so highly important to Ireland. It is pleasing, however, to notice that in the county of Mayo, 2,499 acres are reported in the constabulary returns for this year. Half of this large quantity has been grown in the neighbourhood of Newport (where three years ago hardly 50 acres of flax could be found), upon the estate of Sir R. O'Donnell, who has done much towards proving the truth of the statement, that the annual import of flax into Great Britain and Ireland, amounting in value to four or five million pounds sterling, might be grown in Ireland, and saved to the kingdom. Less than 300,000 acres of the waste lands of Connaught would be sufficient for this purpose. Sir R. O'Donnell's name has been so frequently mentioned in connection with the growth of flax in Mayo, that it may be well to state a few particulars relative to the proceedings on his estate.

At the time of my visit to the neighbourhood of Newport, nearly *one thousand* persons, principally women, were engaged by Sir R. O'Donnell, in harvesting the crops; the women earned 4d. per day and the men 8d. Even at this miserable rate of wages, I have seldom seen more cheerful or industrious labourers. In some places this work was just ending, and I was much struck with the earnest appeals, which the poor creatures made to us, to obtain work for them, during the coming season, supposing, from the inquiries made, that we had some power of assisting them. "If we don't get work we will all die, your honour." "Won't your honour get us work for the winter, or we will all starve," was the constant and touching appeal; and yet this was from the people whom we daily hear branded as idle and unwilling to work.

Nearly half of the flax grown around Newport is in Sir R. O'Donnell's own hands, and he is purchasing the remainder from his tenants, at the rate of £5 to £7, and in some cases £9 per acre. The rent of the land on which the flax is grown, is often from 30s. to 35s. per acre. The seed costs about 25s., and the two diggings and other expenses which are required may be reckoned at 28s., to which must be added the cost of the extra quantity of manure after so exhausting a crop as flax. After these outlays there can be but little left for the tenant to live upon. At the same time my other inquiries left no doubt on my mind that the value of a crop of flax did mostly leave a very handsome remuneration, after the payment of all the charges attendant on its cultivation.* Several growers in the neighbourhood stated to me that their crops were worth from £15 to £20 per acre. Sir R. O'Donnell, amongst other considerable improvements, is building a flour and skutching mill at Newport.† Whilst writing upon Newport, I ought not to

* Since the publication of the first edition Sir R. O'Donnell has informed me, through a mutual friend, that the flax grown upon his estate was sown too late in the season to produce an average crop, and that in its growth and purchase he was merely acting on behalf of a firm in Manchester, which he had induced to enter extensively into the cultivation of the flax crop. The former fact will of course account for the low price given. Sir R. O'D. also informs me, that the rent stated by me to be paid by the tenants is *greatly above* the average. I must, in justice to myself, say, that the statement of rent and cost of cultivation given above was the result of very particular inquiries amongst the flax-growing tenantry.

† In Belgium, from which country I am informed *the finest and highest priced flax is imported*, the skutching and dressing of the material are con-

omit to mention the exertions of the protestant clergyman there (G. R. Gildea); they are indeed above all praise. He has established a small linen manufactory, which employs a considerable number of hand-loom weavers. During the past winter, nearly 700 women were engaged in hand skutching and spinning flax, who earned from 3s. to 3s. 6d. per week. This gentleman, like many others, most strongly objected to the distribution of gratuitous relief. But this doctrine, of course, implies that work must be provided for the starving people, who are wholly unable to provide it for themselves.

The landlords of Mayo, as well as of many other portions of Connaught, as a class (there are many noble exceptions who feel and see the impolicy and evil of such proceedings), are pursuing a course which cannot fail to add to the universal wretchedness and poverty which exist. The corn crops, bountiful as they may be, are not sufficient to meet the landlords' claim for rent and arrears contracted during the last two years of famine, and it is at least not unnatural for the tenant to be unwilling to give up that, without which he must certainly perish. In every direction, the agents of the landlords, armed with the full powers of the law, are at work—everywhere one sees the driver or bailiff “canting” the small patches of oats or potatoes—or keepers placed over the crop, whose charges, in some cases amounting to as much as the rent distrained for, must be paid by the unfortunate tenant. Even the produce of seed, distributed through the agency of benevolent associations, has been totally swept away. To add to the universal distress caused by this system of seizure, eviction is in many cases practised, and not a few of the roofless dwellings which meet the eye have been destroyed at the instance of the landlords, after turning adrift the miserable inmates; and this even at a time like the present, when the charity of the whole world has been turned towards the relief of this starving peasantry. Whilst upon the island of Achill, I saw a memorable instance of this course of proceeding, at the wretched fishing village of Kiel, belonging to Sir R. O'Donnell. Here, a few days previous to my visit, some twenty families had been ejected, making, as I was informed, with a previous recent eviction, about

ducted entirely by hand labour. Why should not this be the case in Ireland, where labour is so superabundant? The seed is also in general strictly preserved, which is not the case here.

forty.* A crowd of these miserable ejected creatures collected around us, bewailing, with bitter lamentations, their hard fate. One old grey-headed man came tottering up to us, bearing in his arms his bed-ridden wife; and, putting her down at our feet, pointed in silent agony to her, and then to his roofless dwelling, the charred timbers of which were scattered in all directions around. This man said he owed little more than one year's rent, and had lived in the village, which had been the home of his forefathers, all his life. Another man, with five motherless children, had been expelled, and their "boiling-pot" sold for 3s. 6d. Another family, consisting of a widow and four young children, had their only earthly possession, "a little sheep," seized, and sold for 5s. 6d.! But it is needless to multiply cases; instances sufficient have been given to show the hardships and misery inflicted. From this village alone, at least one hundred and fifty persons had been evicted, owing from half a year's to a year and a half's rent. What prospects are there for these miserable outcasts? Death indeed must be the portion of some, for their neighbours, hardly richer than themselves, were principally subsisting upon turnip-tops; whilst the poor-house of the Union at Westport is nearly forty miles distant. Turnips taken—can we say stolen?—from the fields, as they wearily walked thither, would be their only chance of support. Some indeed would never reach their destination—death would release them from their sufferings, and the landlord from his burden. This was the case in one instance, a few days before my visit. A strong active man was found dead from exhaustion on the road side, within a short distance of a house, which he had vainly endeavoured to reach. Whilst attending the meeting of the Board of Guardians, at the poor-house at Westport, I had the opportunity of hearing a number of these cases examined and sifted; and from each heard a repetition

* Sir R. O'Donnell has also informed me, with regard to this transaction, that, being only the *nominal* owner, he was not personally responsible. This circumstance, whilst it may acquit Sir R. O'D. of any personal blame, does but exhibit still more strongly the fearful evils resulting from the present encumbered condition of much of the landed property in Ireland, and from which it cannot be relieved without legislative aid. This explanation will reconcile the reader to the seeming incongruity of Sir R. O'Donnell's exertions for his tenantry around Newport, with the very opposite transactions at Kiel, &c., and confirms the remark previously made, that I believe few landlords in Mayo are working more zealously than he is to obtain a sound position, and which, I might add, his exertions entitle him to.

of the same dismal tales of want and cruel treatment, affecting, by their peculiar harshness, even those who were daily witnesses of similar scenes. Of the 100 persons admitted that day, nearly one-half were the evicted tenantry of Kiel; and during the previous week 75 cases were admitted from Achill, nearly the whole of them the evicted tenants of the same landlord. It may be proper to state, that nearly all of these poor people were provided by the "driver" who ejected them with a recommendation to the workhouse, but the Union of Westport, like almost every other in this part of Ireland, is terribly in debt, in fact bankrupt; and the master of the house strongly remonstrated against further admissions, declaring that he had "neither clothes nor bedding for the women and children," who formed five-sixths of the admissions.

How little the landlords of this part of Ireland are cognizant of the circumstances of the population on their vast uncultivated or neglected estates, may be judged of by the fact that Sir R. O'Donnell stated in my presence that he was entirely ignorant of the evictions which had taken place in Achill, about 25 miles distant from his residence at Newport, although the poor creatures, in coming to the union-house, must necessarily pass through the town where he resided.

I have stated these circumstances as affording a striking example of the working of laws relative to landed property, over which the hereditary owner has no controul. He is the inheritor of very extensive entailed estates (180,000 acres), deeply encumbered before coming into his possession, and few men of his class are struggling more earnestly or working more zealously to obtain a sound position, and few men would be more benefited (and of this I believe he is sensible) by the removal of every restriction, and every privilege by which the system of mere nominal ownership is maintained in Ireland. To be able to sell every acre of land on which he has not the capital to enable him to discharge the duties of ownership, would be alike a blessing to himself and people of Mayo. His lands, if brought under fair remunerative cultivation, would supply employment directly and indirectly, to all the unemployed thousands living upon them; and the human beings whom it now seems to be his policy to drive from his property, would then become a source of wealth, and their petty holdings might resemble the cottage

allotments of some portions of England. Sir R. O'Donnell has, brought several considerable farms upon his estate, which are let to good tenants, under very fair cultivation; but the difficulty which usually exists on these embarrassed estates, of giving adequate leases for the investment of capital for considerable improvements, is a great barrier to this course of proceeding, and I believe that a great portion of the wretched cultivation which prevails throughout Ireland, may be traced to this circumstance. If lands in Mayo were as secure to the farmer as they are on the banks of the Mississippi, I see no reason why they should not be "settled" and cultivated by the men who are crossing the Atlantic to extend the cultivation and increase the resources of the United States. Nor have I been able, after the most careful inquiries and consideration of the subject, to find, in the conduct of the men of Connaught, a justification of the opinion that they would be less industrious in the glens and on the mountain sides of their own loved Erin, than they are found to be in the land of strangers.

I have asked the emigrant Irish farmer in America, why he did not toil at home, from "sunrise to sun-down" as he does there, and I have asked the emigrant about to leave his native shore for the unknown West, why he did not employ his little capital and labour in improving the land of Ireland? The answer invariably has been that they would much prefer toiling and expending their little capital at home, if they had land at a fair rent, and leases which would enable them to enjoy with certainty the fruits of their labour. The small farmers of Ireland are, too generally, rack-rented tenants at will, and have no confidence in the justice or mercy of those who have the land in charge.

It is probable that one-fourth, *at least*, of the whole population of Connaught will require to be supported during the coming winter; in Mayo, as well as in some of the Unions of Galway, Leitrim, Roscommon and Sligo, nearer one-half. The total inability of many of these Unions to collect a rate, at all commensurate with the wants of their population, may be easily shown by the instance of the Union of Westport, which with a population, in 1841, of 77,953 persons, is valued for the poor's-rate at £38,876, giving little more than 10s. per head for every person in the Union; a rate of 7s. in the pound had just been struck. During the seven months of the operation of the Temporary Relief Act, a sum, larger than

the whole annual value of the Union was expended, £43,617; whilst at one period more than two-thirds of the population, 57,253 persons, received daily rations. The net annual valuation for the whole of Connaught does not give more than about 20s. per head for the whole population, while in Leinster it is nearly £3. There are, it must be observed, some electoral divisions in Connaught, which give little more than 5s., and some in the county of Donegal are as low as 3s. It will not then be a matter of surprise, that nearly the whole of the Unions in this province are deeply in debt, and many bankrupt, and that several of the poor-houses, with scarcely a sixth of their full number of inmates, have been closed against further admissions. At Clifden, in Galway, the Union is bankrupt, and I found that a few days previous to my visit, the wretched inmates of the poor-house had been expelled and the doors closed. Many of these poor creatures had taken up their abode in some holes or cavities in a hill side adjoining the town, where gravel appeared to have been dug. Their sunken faces and wasted forms told too clearly the tale of hunger and privation, and reminded me of the worst scenes I had witnessed, whilst visiting some parts of the country last winter. I cannot easily forget the countenance of one poor lad, about fourteen years of age, who with a hollow choking voice begged of me "a little meal to keep the life in him." The ghastly livid face and emaciated form, wasted with hunger and sores, of this breathing skeleton, told me that to him this world would soon pass away.

The estates which compose the Union of Clifden are (like most others in Connaught) mortgaged to nearly their full value. The nominal owner of a rent-roll of thousands, lives either in Dublin or abroad, or shut up in his castle, the dependant of the mortgagees, who allow him a pittance of a few hundreds a year. The system of nominal ownership, either of bankrupt residents or of absentees, is certainly one of the greatest impediments to the improvement of Ireland. But, whatever may be the poverty of the nominal possessor, the land has yielded and will yield its produce to some one; and is not he who receives the produce of the soil, whatever relation he may stand in, bound to exercise the duties which belong to ownership?

The difficulty which exists in carrying out the provisions of the new Poor Law in Connaught, arising from its poverty, is greatly increased by the ignorance and want of honesty on

the part of many of those elected to fill the office of guardian. This difficulty has been partially met by dissolving the local boards in three of the five Unions in Mayo, and appointing paid guardians. The Poor Law Commissioners appear to have been peculiarly fortunate in the selection of officers for the very onerous duty of superintending these Unions. Happily, the other Unions of Mayo have at least one gentleman, in himself a host, who presides over or attends to both,* and who, one of the few good resident landlords of Mayo, has done much by his straightforward example and honourable conduct to carry out the intentions of the government. I am sure the name of George Vaughan Jackson will occur to you; and I may say that he considers the new poor-law will require for its beneficial application to this district, various modifications before it can be at all properly adapted to a state of society so different to that which exists in England, or the more comfortable portions of Ireland. Here poverty and destitution are the unvarying lot of the mass—comfort and independence are hardly known.

The opinion of this gentleman and of several others who have paid deep attention to the subject is, that if the poor-rate were collected entirely from the landlords, thus making it a rent charge, as is the case with the tithes, it would be placed upon a much better footing. Increased facilities for recovering the rate from the estates or property of an absentee proprietor, where he is a head landlord, would be needful, and are so, I think, in any case. This gentleman, like others who are really working for the improvement of the country, felt deeply annoyed and discouraged by the load which the unemployed poor on the estates of absentee or mere nominal proprietors, brings upon him. If each proprietor was responsible only for the rates on his own land, he would, in many cases, soon free himself from the burden of pauperism by profitable employment of the labourers on his estate. It appears to me, however, that there are serious objections to making the poor's rate a rent charge, and also to the further division of rateable districts.

* Since the first edition was published the local Board of Guardians of one of the two remaining Unions (Ballina) has requested to be freed from the very onerous duties which devolved upon it, and a board of paid guardians has been appointed in its place. The Swineford Union is therefore the only one in Mayo remaining in the hands of local guardians.

The difficulty of obtaining suitable collectors, or of collecting a rate when struck, may be inferred from the fact, that in one Union in Mayo, although a commission of 2s. 6d. in the pound, or £1,000 for collecting £8,000, was offered, it was quite a matter of uncertainty whether any one could be found to accept of the office.

I will here refer, although somewhat out of place, to the condition of the union-houses of Connaught. I have already stated that owing to the want of funds, great difficulty exists in many of the Unions in providing for the inmates, but I am happy in being able to state that a large number are well managed, and are in an improved condition, as compared with last year. The Union-houses of Sligo and Boyle are in beautiful order. The worst which I visited was that of Carrick-upon-Shannon: it was in a miserable state, and the doors were closed against further admissions; and although built for seven hundred, had but two hundred and eighty inmates; the gates were besieged by seventy or eighty wretched beings who in vain implored for admission. Numbers of them were in various stages of fever, which was terribly prevalent in the neighbourhood, and the fever sheds over-crowded. Two months before my visit, the doors of the poor-house were opened and the inmates expelled, entailing upon them most dire misery. Stern necessity has, in a considerable degree, overcome the strong prejudices of the poor people to enter these houses, and they are now generally full.*

Nearly two-thirds of the inmates of the Union-houses of Connaught are, as may be expected, children, many of them orphans. The neglected condition of the children in the Union-houses is a subject which often struck me as deserving serious attention. In many Unions, owing to their bankrupt state, there are no books, and no means whatever for providing the necessary books and school requisites; and thus we may see hundreds of children wholly idle and unemployed, where a few pounds expense would enable them to be taught.

* The following extract from an address to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, signed by the Relief Committee of Swineford Union, county Mayo, presents, in a very striking light, the condition of the people and of the Union-houses last year: "In this Union, Swineford, the prejudices of the population to a poor-house were so deep and inveterate, that the house was a long time before one pauper could be induced to enter it. Famine, however, came on with such unrelenting severity, that in a short time the house was filled with the number (seven hundred) it was intended for. On the

It is to be regretted that the Irish National School Society allows so favourable an opportunity for educating a large portion of the rising generation to pass away. It is probable, that in the one hundred and thirty Union-houses of Ireland, there are, at least, thirty thousand children under sixteen years of age; and although it is by no means intended to be inferred that the whole are untaught, yet it is a fact, that a large number are either inefficiently taught or wholly uneducated. In the nineteen houses of Connaught there are about six thousand children, and although in some there are really first-rate schools, the majority are quite insufficiently supplied with books or teachers, and several are entirely without books—three of the five Unions of Mayo, containing eleven hundred and fifty children (of whom three hundred and fifty are orphans), are thus circumstanced. As these Unions are deeply in debt, we cannot feel surprised that the feeding of the inmates has absorbed all their attention; and unless private charity or the National School Society supply this want, these children will be still left wholly uneducated; nor is school learning the only part of education required for these unfortunate children—industrial employment, especially in handicraft trades, might fit them for earning their bread when they leave the house, and employ them profitably whilst there. From the number of able-bodied men and boys who are compelled to enter these Union-houses, agricultural schools or model farms might, I believe, be most beneficially established, and profitably carried out in connexion with

dreadful 10th of November, one hundred and twenty were admitted beyond the regulated number, hundreds were refused admission for want of room, some unhappy beings perished on the high roads and in the fields. Influenced by terror and dismay—leaving entire districts almost deserted—the better class of farmers, in numbers, sold their property at any sacrifice, and took flight for America, and the humbler classes left the country in masses, hoping to find a happier doom in any other region. This awful state of things continued during the winter and spring, in a greater or less degree. In this Union, three hundred and sixty-seven persons died in the poor-house; the master of the house also died. In an adjoining Union, Ballina, two hundred were admitted to the house beyond the number it was built for (twelve hundred); hundreds were refused admission for want of room, and *eleven hundred and thirty-eight died in the house*; the medical officer of the house was also carried off. In another adjoining Union, Ballinrobe, all the officers of the house were swept away, and two hundred and fifty-four inmates of the house perished.”

them. The value which the farmers place upon agricultural knowledge, or upon skilled agriculturists, has been shown in the few instances where agricultural schools have been established, by their great anxiety to obtain, as servants, the boys educated in them. This subject seems to be well deserving the notice of the Commissioners.

The enormous size of the Unions of Connaught is also a subject which deserves attention; I have before mentioned that Leinster, which contains nearly the same area and population, has nearly double the number of Unions, and, of course, Union-houses. The Union of Ballina (county Mayo) is about 60 miles in width by 30 in breadth, or nearly three times the size of Middlesex, containing an area of 509,154 acres, with a population of 120,797 persons, and a net annual value of £95,774. Let us suppose an Union stretching from London to Buckingham or Oxford in one direction, and from London to Basingstoke in another, with a poor-house at St. Albans, and we shall have a good idea of the extent of the Ballina Union. A consideration of these facts, or a glance at the map, will convince any one how impossible it is for the wretched paupers of the extreme or even central portions of this mammoth Union to receive the relief which, by law, is designed for them. Look to the parish of Belmullet in the barony of Erris, itself as large as the county of Dublin, and conceive for a moment the hardships of those who travel 50 miles or more to the poor-house at Ballina. The barony of Erris alone is clearly large enough for one Union, and ought to have its poor-house at Belmullet.*

I must be allowed to dwell at some length upon the peculiar misery of this barony of Erris, and parish of Belmullet, which I spent some days in examining. Afflicting as is the general condition of Mayo—fearful as are the prospects of the province in general, there is here yet a lower depth in misery, a district almost as distinct from Mayo as Mayo is from the eastern parts of Ireland. Human wretchedness seems concentrated in Erris, the culminating point of man's physical

* Since the publication of the previous edition this Union has been divided as mentioned above; the electoral divisions of Binghamstown and Belmullet forming an Union, with a temporary poor-house at Binghamstown, and it is intended to build the Union-house at Belmullet. An Inspecting Officer and Vice-Guardian have also been appointed, whose indefatigable exertions for the relief of this distressed district are and have been instrumental in saving the lives of numbers of its wretched inhabitants.

degradation seems to have been reached in the Mullet. It may seem needless to trouble you with particular descriptions of the distress I have witnessed; for these descriptions are but repetitions of the far too familiar scenes of the last winter and spring; although the present seem aggravated by an earlier commencement; nevertheless, such a condition as that of Erris ought, however painful, to be forced on our attention until remedies are found and applied.

This barony is situated upon the extreme north-west coast of Mayo, bounded on two sides by the Atlantic ocean. The population last year was computed at about 28,000; of that number, it is said, at least 2,000 have emigrated, principally to England, being too poor to proceed to America; and that 6,000 have perished by starvation, dysentery, and fever. There is left a miserable remnant of little more than 20,000; of whom 10,000, at least, are, strictly speaking, on the very verge of starvation. Ten thousand people within forty-eight hours' journey of the metropolis of the world, living, or rather starving, upon turnip-tops, sand-eels, and sea-weed, a diet which no one in England would consider fit for the meanest animal which he keeps. And let it not be supposed that of this famine diet they have enough, or that each of these poor wretches has a little plot of turnips on which he may feed at his pleasure. His scanty meal is, in many cases, taken from a neighbour hardly richer than himself, not indeed at night, but, with the daring of absolute necessity, at noon-day.*

On entering the houseless and uncultivated region of Erris, the traveller is reminded of the wilds of Canada: for some miles hardly an acre of cultivated land or the appearance of

* The Inspecting Officer in his reports to the Poor-Law Commissioners, written about a month subsequently, thus forcibly bears out this statement: "During the past week I have visited every portion of my district except the extreme part of Belmullet electoral division, and I regret to state that distress—indeed judging by the appearance of the people, I may say starvation—appears nearly general, but more particularly in the electoral division of Binghamstown (the Mullet), where the poor really are in a sad state, *their only* food bad turnips, and their supply of them limited, many having nothing to subsist upon but the roots of weeds."

The most pressing necessity has, to a great extent, been relieved, by carrying out an extensive system of out-door relief under the new Poor-Law, and by the feeding of the children in schools maintained by the funds of the British Association, which were placed at the disposal of Government. There are nearly 3,000 children thus fed, and 7,000 persons in receipt of relief from the Poor-Law. The turnips are long since eaten.

human residence greets the eye. Yet this district is reported by the Waste Land Commissioners as peculiarly capable of improvement. After some miles ride I found a resting place for my horse, and leaving him to bait, explored, in the mountains, a village upon the property of Sir R. Palmer, a non-resident proprietor, who is said to have an income of many thousands from this county, but is doing nothing to improve his estate, or to give employment to this starving portion of his tenantry. Most of the inhabitants of this village were owing a year and a half's rent, for their "sums" of land (uncertain quantities), for which they generally paid from £3 to £8 per year. The condition of the people was deplorable; and the last year had not left them the means of meeting this demand. The landlord's "driver" was pursuing his calling, seizing almost every little patch of oats or potatoes, and appointing keepers whose charges, amounting to 45s. for the fifteen days allowed between seizure and sale, are added to the rent, and unless the tenant can raise a sum sufficient to satisfy the landlord and his bailiff, his whole crop is liable to be "canted" and himself and family to be evicted.

One poor widow with a large family, whose husband had recently died of fever, had a miserable patch of potatoes seized, and was thus deprived of her only resource for the ensuing winter. What could she do? The poor-house was thirty miles distant, and it was full. Though many of these ruined creatures were bewailing their cruel fate, I heard nothing like reproach or reflection upon the author of their misery, and the bailiff told me that he had no fear of molestation in pursuing his calling.

In this village fever was terribly prevalent, and the food such as before described, but wanting the sand-eels and seaweed. Advancing further in Erris, the desolation and wretchedness were still more striking. One may indeed at times imagine oneself in a wilderness abandoned to perpetual barrenness and solitude. But here and there scattered over this desolate landscape, little green patches appear unexpectedly where no other sign of man presents itself to you; as you walk over the bog, and approach nearer to the spot, a curl of smoke arises from what you suppose to be a slight rise on the surface.

To use the graphic language of a late European visitor, "Let the traveller look where he is going, however, or he

may make a false step, the earth may give way under his feet, or he may fall into—what? into an abyss, a cavern, a bog? No, into a hut, a human dwelling-place, whose existence he has overlooked, because the roof on one side was level with the ground, and nearly of the same consistency,—if he draws back his foot in time, and looks around, he will find the place filled with a multitude of similar huts, all swarming with life.* Of what is this human dwelling-place composed? The wall of the bog often forms two or three sides of it, whilst sods taken from the adjoining surface form the remainder, and cover the roof. Window there is none, chimneys are not known; an aperture in front, some three or four feet in height, serves the office of door, window and chimney—“light, smoke, pigs, and children, all pass in and out of this aperture.” The moment a stranger is observed, the inhabitant retreats within the dwelling; and if you would converse with its occupant, or explore its interior economy, it is needful to follow him. Do not be afraid, however, for although the only decently-dressed man who may have visited him before is the landlord’s driver, the inhabitants of these bog-holes are a quiet harmless race. Stoop low enough, or you may carry away the door-post; it is perhaps safest to enter on all-fours, as I have had to do—the darkness and stifling turf-smoke for awhile prevent the use of the eyes, and unable to distinguish whence comes the welcome which accosts you, of “God speed your honour,” you instinctively grope forward; beware, however, of too suddenly regaining an erect posture, or your hat may appear through the roof; for in no part does the height exceed five or six feet. Accustomed by this time to the darkness, which the inmates in vain endeavour to dispel, by lighting small reeds or the pith of rushes, you are able to discern the size of this human burrow: and in a space from seven or ten feet square (I have measured them even less), you may find a family of six or eight persons, men, women and children, in this filthy stinking hole, kneeling or squatting round the peat fire, or lying on the damp ground. As for furniture there is none—one or two broken stools and the “boiling-pot,” and in some a slightly raised space, upon which is spread a little damp dirty straw, oftener upon the cold ground, and a ragged coverlid, constitute in many cases the whole. Surely, then, the inmates must be clothed in skins, to protect them from

* Kohl.

the cold and damp. Alas! no—rags and tatters are their only garments, and nakedness even is the portion of some, who are obliged to remain in-doors or borrow from their neighbours. I asked a poor inhabitant of one of these hovels near Belmullet, whose dropsy-swollen body showed the effects of “the hunger,” what he and his family, six or seven in number, had to subsist on? In reply to my question, he pointed to some withered turnip-tops lying in the mud, at the door of the cabin, “Upon these.” “And what else?” I asked. “Yonder’s one of the family, seeking for sea-weed, on the beach,” said he, stretching out his skinny arm in that direction, where his daughter was busily engaged. “And are there many so badly off?” “Yes, worse, aback in the mountains; they are dying there every day.” How could worse be, when he seemed to be enduring a daily death? But indeed I knew that there were many worse off “aback in the mountains,” and that deaths from starvation had actually occurred.

At Bangor, through the kindness of your correspondent, W. T. Campbell, I obtained several accurate particulars relative to the state of the barony, from the police returns. In one district, “where last year 650 families existed, there are now only 500, half of whom are existing upon the small turnips” before described; and of this food “not sufficient to last the whole for two months.”* In one town-land, “there are eighty-five landholders, and but *two* stacks of oats, hardly any potatoes, and but few turnips.”

In another parish, there are “whole villages depopulated,” “whole town-lands uncultivated,” “scarcely 400 families remaining out of 587 last year;” and, on an average of the whole barony, it would be safe to say, “that one acre is not this year cultivated to forty in ordinary seasons,” and that “there is not food for the whole for six weeks.”

From Bangor to Belmullet, a distance of twelve miles, the same dreary waste of uncultivated and neglected land extends. In only one place did I observe any sign of improvement or superior cultivation. This was upon an estate of a proprietor named Atkinson; and as this is the only instance in the ba-

* A printed document relative to this district, Ballecroy, now before me, states—1st. That there are no resident gentry. 2nd. There is no resident minister. 3rd. There is no market town—a poor man may have to travel forty-four miles for a stone of meal. 4th. There is no medical man or dispensary within twenty-two miles.

rony of any attempt to adopt a perfect system of drainage, it is the more observable, presenting, as the land does, a pleasing contrast to the desolation around it. I never saw what appeared to me more complete or excellent work. It has been executed under the superintendence of a Scotch steward. The earnings of the labourers, indeed, were low enough, barely 6d. per day, but this employment was a great boon to them. It may safely be said of the landlords of Erris generally, that there appears as much want of willingness as of ability on their part to do anything for the benefit of their starving tenantry or wasted estates. Erris affords one of the most perfect specimens of the mischiefs connected with that vicious system, by which landed property remains in the hands of those who are wholly unable to discharge its duties, or even to open the door to allow others to perform them.*

At Belmullet, the capital of the district of Erris, a crowd of almost naked perishing creatures were congregating in the streets, in a state of "perfect destitution," as the landlord of the inn assured me; they had no homes, no shelter, no land, no food; they slept at night in the streets, and begged for support during the day, of neighbours hardly richer than themselves. He told me also that "six persons had died in the streets in the few previous nights;" and I am sure that several whom I saw there are now beyond the reach of earthly calamity. The ghastly smile which momentarily played on the countenances of these living skeletons, at the prospect of a little temporary relief, I cannot easily forget. It rendered still more painful the expression of intense anxiety and bitter misery which was exhibited in their livid and death-set features.

Although so much has already been said about evictions, I can hardly omit to mention one instance connected with that system of extermination which many Irish landlords think themselves justified in adopting. The extreme western portion of Erris is a narrow promontory, called the "Inner

* A short time previously to my second visit, the owner (nominally) of a rent-roll of £500 a-year died of fever, in the capacity of master of the temporary poor-house at Binghamstown. He was formerly a Justice of the Peace. In another case, the owner of 300 acres of land applied to the Board of Guardians for out-door relief. The Government Inspecting Officer, under date of the 13th of November, says of this district, in his Reports to the Poor-Law Commissioners, "*There is no proprietor who takes the least interest in the welfare of the unfortunate poor of this district.*"

Mullet :” upon this wretched promontory, a proprietor named Walsh, residing in another part of the country, has an estate, from which he was desirous of ejecting a number of tenants.* As no less than one hundred and forty families were to be turned out, and cast forth to beg or perish (for the poor-house was fifty miles distant, and could not have contained them), it was natural to expect some resistance, even to the preliminary process, from persons with such prospects. The landlord, therefore, summoned the sheriff to his assistance—the stipendiary magistrate was requested to call out the police : but a maddened tenantry might overcome a handful of police ; and as it was thought the “kindest” way to prevent bloodshed by showing a superior power, fifty soldiers, headed by the commanding officer of the district, were added to the force. Surely to the minds of these poor ignorant people, law, police, military, magistracy and proprietary must have seemed alike confederated against them.†

I have no particular information respecting the character of these tenants, and it is of course not improbable that some of them may have been far from “fulfilling their duties :” be this as it may, it is impossible for an Englishman to contemplate one of these wholesale evictions without feelings of the deepest pity for the sufferers and indignation towards the inflictors.

The rent which has usually been obtained from these little tenants has never left them more than the barest means of subsistence upon potato diet ; the corn which they may have grown and the pig which they have fed have always gone to the owner of the soil, and yet the loss of these little plots of land has been and still is a question of existence. Miserable as is the usual condition of the little farmer or cottier, yet when he loses his little holding he is thrown into a condition in comparison of which his former position was highly privileged. The mere labourer, where there are no employers, is an utter outcast, driven to beggary in a country in which the only givers are the poor cottiers or farmers, from whose station he has fallen. It may be said, that this extra-

* The practical operation of the laws in relation to ejectment in Ireland is *particularly severe*, much more so than in England.

† For further detail respecting this cruel eviction, the reader's attention is particularly requested to the postscript above referred to, containing the particulars, obtained in a very recent visit to the scene.

ordinary visitation presses as heavily upon the owner as the occupier; and we freely admit that the well-disposed owner, who is in many cases the heir to a deeply-encumbered estate—the result perhaps of a long-continued system of the most reckless extravagance—is truly an object of our sympathy; nevertheless, the consequences of their ancestors' course must be considered as a part of their entail. And, where land has been held for generations by tenants who have paid all which they could raise beyond a bare subsistence, is not the landlord morally liable for the risk of extraordinary providences? In a country labouring under such complicated evils, it may fairly be doubted whether the ordinary exercise of the rights of property, as practised in England, can be equitably and morally carried out.

Self-preservation is a primary law of our nature, and that course of proceeding, in any community, which powerfully calls that principle into antagonistic action, and leads to resistance on the part of honest men, must be itself unsound. I cannot, therefore, whilst pitying the impoverished landlord, justify his course of proceeding towards his tenants;* and if the primary duty of a good Government be the protection of life and property, is not legislative interference called for to prevent the misery, disease and death, which are inseparable from these wholesale evictions?

This barony of Erris, as previously remarked, forms part of the large Union of Ballina, and the poor-house is at least forty miles from Belmullet,—forty miles across a wild and dreary waste. The annual value of the barony gives little more than 10s. per head, for a population of whom two-thirds at least will require relief. While in the neighbourhood of Belmullet, I called upon several of your correspondents, who confirmed even the worst accounts I had heard of the wretchedness of the district. They appeared completely dispirited and worn out, and regarded the coming winter with gloomy forebodings and despair. The fever, which is raging throughout this district with unabated severity, prevents their employing the poor women, or visiting their neighbours as

* At the sessions in Belmullet (which terminated on the day of my arrival there), a civil bill was granted against a wretched creature for £2. 5s.—a half year's rent, due in May last. A milch cow, the only support of the family, had been seized and sold for this rent, for 17s., although worth £2. 10s. The balance was decreed for! The barrister acting as judge strongly commented upon the harshness of the case.

heretofore. I hardly visited a family among the more respectable classes, in which I did not find that several of its members had been attacked, or were mourning the loss of their nearest friends. In Belmullet especially, it might truly be called a plague; and I was warned of the danger of entering the town, as every other house was said to be more or less infected by its deadly presence. If it be thus prevalent among the upper classes, what must it be among the inmates of the miserable hovels, crowded together upon filthy straw on the mud floors of their cabins, without suitable nourishment or care! In one family seven were lying prostrate, in another five, in another three were sick; so fearful were the poor of the infection, that they frequently warned me of entering their cabins. However, the precaution, in particular cases, is hardly needed; for as it was frequently remarked to me, infection once in these hovels is almost certain to remain.

The very great mortality of the past year in this district was confirmed by all with whom I conversed; and the belief seems to be general, that unless immediate steps be taken to relieve the people, deaths will be even more numerous, and the effects of famine far more terrible during the coming winter; and that instead of twenty thousand inhabitants, ten thousand only will be left. It is a state of things which makes one unhappy to write about, how much more to witness. At Belmullet, upon the inner Mullet (that *ultima Thule* of human misery), at Bangor, at Rosspport, at Pullatomas—everywhere I witnessed the same extent of waste land—the same neglect of cultivated land—everywhere crowds of wretched beings imploring vociferously for food or work,—“Feed us or we die,” seems written on the countenances of every one.* I have visited the wasted remnants of the once noble Red Man on his reservation grounds in North America, and explored the “negro quarter” of the degraded and enslaved African, but never have I seen misery so intense, or

* It is impossible for any charitable association to supply the vacuum caused by the expiration of the “Temporary Relief Act,” which, whatever may be said of it, doubtless saved *multitudes* of lives. It will no doubt be grateful to the reader to know that the particular attention of the “Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends” has been directed to this suffering district, and that even at this time *numbers* were relieved by its grants. The very small number of persons to whom funds for distribution in this and similar districts can be entrusted, renders it absolutely impossible to do all that can be desired.

physical degradation so complete, as among the dwellers in the bog-holes of Erris.

“ Who shall enumerate the crazy huts
 And tottering hovels, whence do issue forth
 A ragged offspring, with their upright hair,
 Crowned like the image of fantastic Fear?
 * * * * *
 * * * Shrivelled are their lips ;
 Naked and coloured like the soil, the feet
 On which they stand, as if thereby they drew
 Some nourishment, as trees do by their roots,
 From earth the common mother of us all.
 Figure and mien, complexion and attire,
 Are leagued to strike dismay; but outstretched hand
 And whining voice denote them suppliants
 For the least boon that pity can bestow.”

It is impossible to view the scenes which we have vainly endeavoured to describe, and even those of a less aggravated character, which present themselves to the traveller in so many parts of Ireland, without earnestly inquiring what can be done for such multitudes of our fellow-creatures, whom we are bound to view as claiming the consideration of brethren, not only by the ties of our common humanity, but also by the peculiar ones of national fellowship ; nor can we restrict ourselves to the question, how the present calls of their hunger may be appeased, but we instinctively inquire how their condition may be permanently improved? These feelings must be my apology for now referring, not only to present remedies, but also to some of the measures which appear to be absolutely required as the first steps in the elevation of the people.

The full consideration of this subject would occupy a volume, rather than the brief space which can be allotted to it in this letter, if indeed I were in any way competent for the exposition of this vast subject. I will now proceed to consider the means which are, or which may be brought into operation for the *immediate relief* of the people of Connaught. In doing this, I cannot, however, entirely abstain from the consideration of measures for the *future* improvement of the country, since it is evident that the former ought, as much as possible, to be viewed in connexion with the latter.

We naturally inquire, in the first place, will the Poor-Law supply the needs of the destitute?—will the Government grant

its aid? — will charitable funds rescue the starving from disease and death?

I have already endeavoured to show, that in a large portion of Connaught, the poor-rate cannot be calculated upon, in the present circumstances of the country, as sufficient to meet the wants of the destitute; in a few districts it may supply a considerable portion of these wants, but in general it certainly cannot do so. We shall agree that *every* fair means should be tried, before resort is had to Government aid. But I must say, that it appeared to me probable that this aid, in some form or other, would be required during the coming winter in several parts of Ireland. If aid be given by Government, the application of a portion to the completion of some of those roads in Connaught, which were commenced and left in an unfinished and dangerous state last winter, would prove of the greatest service to the people, in facilitating the improvement of land, and in furnishing easy means of communication in parts where this is now much needed. If it were possible to do this without calling into operation the abuses of last year, it would certainly be preferable, morally as well as otherwise, to a gratuitous administration of out-door relief. The appointment of Inspectors to twenty-two of the poorest Unions in Ireland, for the purpose of assisting in carrying out the provisions of the Poor-Law, &c., cannot fail to promote their right administration. The service which the Government Inspectors rendered to the country during the past year can hardly be over estimated; and I feel great pleasure in being thus able to bear witness to their value.*

With respect to the supply of the people's wants through charitable means, I believe that your funds, and those of all other relief associations, will be quite inadequate to provide for the real necessities of the miserable people of Connaught, if they cannot speedily be enabled to help themselves. My testimony is not needed to the immense value of your past services, for the support of the unhappy people. Wherever I have gone, I have heard but one opinion expressed respecting them. There is no doubt that these benevolent exertions have saved thousands from absolute starvation; but yet you

* My last visit enables me most fully to bear out these remarks. I have no hesitation in saying that the appointment of Inspecting Officers has been the means, conjointly with the Boards of paid Guardians, of saving thousands of lives during this winter—1847-48.

well know how far short were these efforts, when compared with the necessity of the occasion, and that it is highly undesirable to continue, a moment longer than is necessary, a system of eleemosynary support. Large claims upon your remaining funds will doubtless arise in the approaching winter, for the relief of the sick, the aged, and the infirm; but I know your large experience has led you to a deepened conviction of the importance of also using your funds for the purpose of enabling the able-bodied to help themselves. If work to a considerable extent could be provided for the able-bodied, they would do much towards relieving others; for whatever be his faults, the poor Irishman cannot be accused of indifference to the claims of his helpless neighbour. But after such a trial as the peasantry of Ireland have passed through, having pawned or sold all their little possessions in furniture, clothing, and tools, it must be some time, under the most favourable circumstances, before their labour will be able to supply their own wants. Besides, it must be remembered, that the supply of cheap food, by the potato, which has enabled the cottier to exist on such extremely limited means, is now to a very great extent withdrawn; nor do I see how even the class above the cottier—the small farmer—will be able to pay his present rent, when he himself can no longer depend for subsistence upon the potato; for it is generally asserted that the produce of one acre of potatoes is, as a means of supporting human life, equal to at least three acres of oats.

WORK then is the one thing needed—work, remunerative alike to the employer and to the employed. “Won’t your honour give us work, then?” is the cry uttered by thousands. “If we could but find employment for the perishing people,” is the desponding echo of those who are daily and hourly struggling with noble self-denial to save them.

And although there are many facts in connexion with the employment of this destitute population which appear discouraging, I think there are far stronger evidences that *patient and judicious* efforts for this purpose, would not be in vain.

How then can work be provided, and how can that necessary stimulus be given to labour, without which, Saxon and Celt would be alike indolent and fainthearted?

In looking at this question—the furnishing immediate means of subsistence, by means of employment to the starv-

ing—presses upon us ; but we cannot, as previously observed, entirely separate it from the consideration of the permanent improvement of the condition of the people.

We have seen that throughout Mayo, and especially in Erris, there exist many thousand acres of uncultivated waste land profitably reclaimable, and many thousand idle, starving labourers ; and it would certainly seem an easy thing, where two elements so needful for success are found together, to combine them for their own advantage. Why has not this been done ? The true answer I believe is to be found, not in the reluctance of the labourers to work, but in the laws which maintain the false position of the proprietor, when he is utterly unable to discharge his duties. The facilities granted by government, by means of loans, on most advantageous terms for the improvement of land, ought to furnish no inconsiderable portion of labour immediately to the poor of Connaught ; but here again, the embarrassed condition of the estates frustrates the good intention of government. The employment of the people, consequent upon the improved cultivation of the land* must, therefore, principally be con-

* Since my former visit a very interesting experiment has been commenced, and is now carrying on in the vicinity of Ballina, Co. Mayo. Five hundred acres of land have been placed at the disposal of the C. R. Committee of the Society of Friends, by a few landed proprietors, for the sake of giving employment rather than gratuitous relief to some of the thousands of willing but unemployed labourers of Mayo. The land thus in course of cultivation is offered rent and poor-cess free for one year. Spade husbandry, in which the men are instructed by one of Lord Clarendon's practical instructors, is alone allowed ; and the crops which are intended to be grown, consisting principally of turnips, parsnips, carrots, peas, &c., with a very small portion of corn and flax, will, of course, belong to the Relief Committee.

Accompanied by my friend John Lees, a protestant clergyman of Ballina (whose unremitting and kind-hearted exertions for the relief and improvement of the poor of Mayo are too well known to require notice from me), I visited several parties of the men who were employed. On one farm four sets of men of fifteen each, on another sixty men, were engaged in digging at one long trench ; and it does but need to bring the most confirmed believer in the inherent indolence of the Celt, to witness the active industry of these poor men, to convince him that even in Ireland he will work as well as a Saxon, provided he can feel assured of a fair remuneration for his labours.

At least four hundred men are thus employed, earning from 8d. to 1s. per day ; and I could not avoid wishing that the Local Committee would make the latter sum the minimum, for I am sure the men earned it.

Nearly the whole of this land would have remained uncultivated, and the addition of so many acres of food is alone a great practical benefit ;

sidered as resulting from measures for the future and permanent improvement of the country.

For the immediate improvement of a large portion of the inhabitants of Connaught, we must, therefore, look to the encouragement of the fisheries and the native manufactures; the former is of the most pressing importance. The two largest counties of Connaught (Galway and Mayo), are peculiarly adapted for carrying on the fisheries to advantage. The whole of their long line of coast abounds in fish of every description, and of the finest quality. Close to the shore, immense shoals of herrings and mackerel were sport-

but a far greater benefit is conferred by the instruction of so many men in an improved mode of husbandry, and by the example thus set to the whole neighbourhood,—an example which had already begun to be followed by several of the small farmers. The value of this experiment, whichever way we regard it, is immense, and helped to confirm me in the belief elsewhere expressed that Ireland possesses in herself the means of her own regeneration, were she enabled by the removal, rather than the enacting of laws, to use her dormant resources.

The following series of resolutions, drawn up by a few gentlemen who are superintending these operations, will, I think, be read with interest.

“No. 1. That all work shall be paid for, where it is practicable, by measurement and valuation, and not by time-work, and that all payments shall be made to individuals in person without drawback or reductions as regards extraneous obligations under any pretext whatever, and under penalty of subjecting parties transgressing to instant dismissal.

“2nd. That all men employed shall, if it is found necessary, receive a weekly payment, as maintenance, on account, till the measurement and valuation of work shall enable payment to be made in full for work PROPERLY EXECUTED ACCORDING TO PRESCRIBED RULES of practical instructor.

“3rd. That sale of, or drinking of whiskey, or in any way being concerned in illicit distillation, shall subject men to instant dismissal, and exclusion from employment.

“4th. That any attempt at substituting men on the lists for others not on the lists, shall subject parties transgressing to instant dismissal, unless permission in writing be first obtained from the Committee.

“5th. That as the object of this experiment in the cultivation of the soil is the relief of human suffering, and the improvement and happiness of society, every person employed must consider himself as a paid watchman and protector of property, and that if any theft, fraud, or larcenies take place, wages will be suspended till full amount of injury done is paid for.

“6th. No gangman is, under any circumstances whatever, to receive money for men, or in any case more than his own pay.

“Local Committee Rooms, Ballina,
“22nd February, 1848.”

ing, at the time of my visit, as if cast there by an overruling Providence, for the support of a perishing people; whilst, in the deeper seas, cod, ling, turbot, haddock, soles, brett, glisson, salmon, and many other kinds are found in the utmost abundance. How then is it that this treasure is not made use of?—whilst food is at their door the people are starving. In past years, there can be no doubt, that the want of a *market* for the fish has been the great obstacle to the poor fisherman pursuing his trade with any regularity. He was in general a poor cottier who had a miserable boat or “curragh,” and nets and tackle of an equally poor order; as his gains would only be paid for in potatoes, he would have little object in pursuing his avocation much beyond the necessities of his family. If he had the good fortune to reside near a town, he would occasionally be able to obtain something beyond this primitive medium of barter.* When, therefore, the potatoes failed, the poor fisherman, dependent for his support mainly upon this article, found himself entirely destitute. To obtain a little meal for himself and family, he pawned or sold by degrees his fishing-tackle and nets, and even the oars of his boat; and when this was gone, he was left, it is true, the owner of a boat, but really deprived of the means of using it. Enable him to fish, and we enable him, not only to keep himself, but to furnish food for his starving neighbours. To do this, it is necessary to supply him, as a loan, with the means of paying for the tackle and needful repairs. In the best modes of fishing, as in all other arts, the Irishman requires *instruction*—but, convince him that the mode you advocate is superior, and he will not be slow to learn and to follow it. The Government has been alive to the great value of the fisheries, and has encouraged their progress in many places very considerably, by the erection of piers and the establishment of curing stations, as well as in some cases, of depôts of lines, nets, &c., which are sold at cost price. At the curing stations, any quantity of fish is taken from the people at a market price. In some instances, these provisions, aided by local effort, have proved highly beneficial; and I believe, that the apparent want of success which has in any case attended these most useful attempts must be attributed to a want of local co-operation, by the

* In these remarks I do not, of course, include the Claddagh fishermen of Galway; they are quite a distinct class, and will be afterwards noticed.

advancement of small sums of money to the fishermen. At Belmullet, for example, where a curing station has been established (thus giving to this remote district, what nothing else could have done, a market), one hundred and twenty-six pounds' worth of fish is the whole quantity, as the agent informed me, which has been offered for sale at the station since its establishment, nearly a year ago. This may appear at first sight discouraging; the short period of trial and the extraordinary distress of the past year are, I think, sufficient to account for it, and we can hardly expect the starving people to buy nets or lines, nor should we expect the Government to lend or give money for this purpose. Still, it is to be hoped that it will not be deterred from giving further encouragement to the fisheries, by the erection of piers, and the establishment of curing stations, since there appears no plan by which the Government can effect so much good at the same cost.

Loans, of small amount, to trust-worthy persons, who would engage in the fisheries, or in any other profitable employment of the destitute, to whose wants you would otherwise have to administer gratuitous relief, seem to be suitable and legitimate appropriations of a portion of your funds. There can be little doubt that if once it were well established that capital could be profitably employed in these channels, it would naturally flow into them. But in the present condition of Ireland we require something like the priming of the pump to bring the existing machinery into action. Your loans would give temporary employment to a considerable extent, and the experiments furnish data which might lead to the most extensive and permanent employment of the people.

All Relief Associations will have, I believe, particularly to turn their attention to this mode of relief, not merely with reference to the economising of their funds, but also to promote the self-reliance of the people, and the permanent improvement of their condition. Local agency alone could not, in many cases, be relied upon for the carrying out of these measures; the assistance of a competent agent from another district would be required; but the expense of a small agency would, it is believed, be amply repaid by the result. These views are most satisfactorily supported by the experiments already made by your committee, especially in the south of Ireland.

Whilst standing upon the magnificent cliffs of Achill, overlooking the wide Atlantic, I saw the deep inlets and bays of that island literally filled with shoals of mackerel and herring, indeed the whole surface of the sea seemed completely alive with them. Around me stood groups of hungry creatures, who looked down upon this inexhaustible supply of food, wholly unable to procure it to allay their cravings. One fishing-boat and three or four currachs alone were engaged, where there was employment for hundreds, and food for the thousands of hungry creatures on the island. The sums required for the assistance of these fisheries are by no means large. One of your correspondents upon this island, whose wishes you have since attended to, stated that by means of a loan of one hundred pounds, he should be able to have ten large currachs* (the boats best adapted to this rocky and dangerous coast) built and completely fitted out with the needful lines, nets, &c., for pursuing the fishing. These ten boats would, on an average, give employment to eight persons each,† representing eighty families of six persons, or four hundred and eighty individuals; "but," added your correspondent, "you may double this, for every family who has employment will support another;" thus, nearly one thousand persons would be permanently supported by a loan of one hundred pounds. Besides giving permanent and profitable employment, a large quantity of nutritious food would be added to the failing resources of the country. Your active correspondent at Achill Sound has established a small curing station, which would be sufficient for preserving any quantity not required by the district, or carried into the interior of the country; and that the markets of this part of Connaught are not over-stocked by native industry, may be illustrated by the fact, that at the sea-port town of Westport (twenty-five miles distant), a Scotch fishing smack was actually supplying the town with fish.

The shores of Erris were likewise swarming with fish. I

* Boats made of tarpauling or oiled canvass, stretched over a light wooden frame—sometimes made of wicker work, similar to those described as in use by the ancient Britons.

† The result of this experiment has already more than realised the expectations formed of it. One hundred of the poor dispossessed tenantry of Achill (see page 12) were immediately upon receipt of the loan, taken from the workhouse at Westport, and constant employment given them: their employer has already repaid a portion of the loan, and states that he has sufficient cured fish on hand to repay the remainder (1848).

found from inquiries, that at least three thousand of the population scattered along its rugged coast might at once find employment or support by means of the fisheries; and knowing the large share of your attention which this barony has always claimed, and the number of persons who were kept alive at the time of my visit by the grants of food made by your committee, I felt strongly that the encouragement of the fisheries and native manufactures would be a still more effectual mode of supporting a large portion of the population; especially, as in your correspondent at Bangor, you have an agent at once efficient and trustworthy, as well as deeply interested in the welfare and improvement of the poorer classes. It has been a source of much pleasure to me to find, since my return, that his services have been engaged for the purpose of carrying out these views.* It may be well to remark that the small boats or currachs are not adapted for the deep-sea fisheries, and as they can make available only a very small portion of the riches of the sea, it is to be regretted that private enterprise has not seconded the judicious assistance afforded by the Government, in places where, as at Belmullet, a constant market is provided. Under good leadership the fishermen of this coast are expert and courageous, and an outlay of a few hundred pounds in larger fishing boats calculated for the cod and ling banks, would prove, as I was assured by the Government agent and other persons conversant with fishing, a very profitable trade.

In connexion with the fisheries of Connaught, I will here refer to the Claddagh† fishermen of Galway, a peculiar and distinct race, far superior as fishermen to the rest of their class. In place of the small boats and currachs used elsewhere, they possess well-built fishing boats — “hookers,” — which are considered by nautical men as models of combined strength and beauty. The little colony of these men, stretching from the town of Galway for some miles along the coast, live apart from the rest of the inhabitants, always marry among themselves, and unlike the other fishermen of Connaught, who generally hold some land, depend entirely upon fishing for support. They have at least one thousand

* This experiment appears likely to be very successful, and gives employment to a large number of persons. The amount of fish obtainable exceeds the highest calculations.

† Claddagh, “sea coast” in Irish.

of these hookers, and a fleet of them in the magnificent bay of Galway forms an interesting and striking scene.

Last year, when William Forster, who sympathized so deeply with the sufferings of the poor Irish, visited this colony of fishermen, he found them in a state of utter destitution. The first shock of the famine, combined with an unfavourable season, and the absence of their usual chief means of barter and support — the potato — had compelled them to pawn their nets and almost every article connected with their boats, for the purpose of purchasing a little meal. Impressed here, as elsewhere, with the necessity of inducing the people to labour for themselves, this opportunity was not neglected, and by means of a grant of one hundred pounds, the Claddagh fishermen were to a great extent enabled to redeem their nets, and the fisheries were resumed; by this timely grant some hundreds of lives were, I doubt not, saved. Although subject to distress, like every other part of Ireland, this colony has escaped the extreme misery and mortality prevalent around them. No particular distress existed at the time of my visit to the Claddagh. It is difficult to arrive at the truth respecting the alleged gross superstition of these curious people, the more so, as few of them speak English; but I came to the conclusion that, although extremely ignorant, and sadly under superstitious dominion, the stories so rife respecting them are, to a very great extent, unfounded.* The laws by which this singular community regulate the fishing of the bay of Galway are founded upon observations, made certainly without much reference to the light which free-trade doctrines have of late shed upon the world, but they may bear comparison with some laws which still exist for the protection of fisheries and game in higher quarters. If, as was suggested to me by a friend, some steps could be adopted for giving instruction to the admiral of the colony or his son, who possess great influence, in the most profitable and approved modes of fishing, much good might be effected; but, at the same time, measures must be adopted to provide a market for the increased exertion of these Claddagh men. At the time of my visit, the market of Galway was completely over-stocked with fish, and tons of it were lying unfit for

* A piscatorial school has just been established at the Claddagh, under the care of the monks of the Claddagh convent, which promises to be of service.

use, the disgusting effluvia rendering approach truly unpleasant. I was a little surprised that the public or private enterprise of Galway had not furnished this part of the coast with a *curing station*; for without this, or a railway communication with Dublin, the labours of these fishermen are very much abridged. The distance from Galway to Dublin is far too great for any extensive trade to be carried on except by railway, and even when the line is completed to Mullingar, the seventy miles unfinished will prove a complete obstacle to the transport of those finer kinds of fish, as turbot, soles, ling, &c., with which the coast of Galway abounds. It appears to me, that the greatest boon which the Government could bestow on the west of Ireland — furnishing the greatest stimulus to the opening out of its enormous resources, especially those of Galway — would be to give some assistance in the formation of the railway which is projected from Mullingar, in connexion with the line which is now in course of completion to the latter town from Dublin.

Leaving the subject of the fisheries, I turn to that of manufactures, which seems to be open to us as a means of immediate relief by employment. For the information of some readers it may be well to remark, that the people of Connaught (as indeed of most other parts of Ireland) are familiar with the use of the loom; their clothing has generally been of native manufacture, and this kind of employment appears particularly congenial to their habits. This may account in part for the extraordinary success which has attended the exertions of the numerous clergymen and ladies, who have laboured most strenuously to promote industrial employment, in order to save their people from the demoralising effects of a gratuitous system of relief. I have previously mentioned the admirable exertions of the Rector of Newport. In that district, owing to the extreme poverty of the people, their native manufactures were of the rudest description, and it required no little firmness and patience on his part to convert the raw Mayo men into skilled workmen and artisans; but to a very great extent he has succeeded. He procured in the first instance a competent workman from Belfast, and obtained patterns of handspun linens of various kinds, including the Russian, which he has imitated in his little factory at Newport with great success. Similar and almost equally well directed efforts have been made in nearly every direction in Connaught, and have proved

the capacity and willingness of the poor destitute people not only to learn and to practise arts, but to maintain themselves by them. The great difficulty in the extension of this kind of employment is however found in the greater cheapness of articles made by machinery than by hand-labour. In one place in Galway I found the house of one of the first families in the county literally converted into a manufacturer's warehouse. In the hall hung a large pair of scales, the floor of the dining-room was covered with flax, fishing-nets and spun thread; whilst a large rice and meal bin occupied the place of the sideboard, and piles of manufactured linen goods were arranged around the room instead of chairs. The ladies of the house had so successfully encouraged manufactures in their neighbourhood, that they had become thoroughly over-stocked with articles for which they could not find a sale at cost price. A gentleman who was with me, conversant with manufactures, stated that they were thoroughly well made, and although very much dearer to the eye than the usual similar articles of the shop, he did not doubt that their durability and excellent quality would prove them cheaper to a purchaser at prices which the noble lady manufacturers would have gladly accepted. The result of these exertions proves satisfactorily the readiness of the people to be employed at even a very low rate of wages, and although the experiment may be said to be a total failure as a commercial transaction, under this amateur guidance; it has proved a highly beneficial means of employing, and an economical mode of feeding, vast numbers of the destitute. It was not to be supposed that these benevolent exertions could compete successfully, in a pecuniary point of view, with the regular manufactures of Ulster or of England; but if flax continues to be grown in Connaught, there is no reason why extensive linen manufactures might not be profitably carried on there.

The native manufactures of Connaught are both linen and woollen, principally the latter, for home use. Galway is noted for its fine flannels, rivalling the Welsh, as well as for its brilliant dyes, and in the opinion of parties practically acquainted with the trade, there appears a great opening for enterprise and the employment of capital in the manufacture of flannel. The native woollen manufactures of Connaught appear also to present the most advantageous opening for temporary employment by means of loans. The articles

usually manufactured are strong and warm, and peculiarly adapted to the wants of the people; and it has often appeared to me very desirable that the funds of the various Ladies' Clothing Associations should be expended upon these home-spun articles, rather than in the purchase of ready made clothing, which is often quite unsuited to the purpose; and although these home-spun articles may be a little dearer per yard, they will ultimately prove much more economical. A very large amount of real good has been effected by the various Ladies' Clothing Associations, perhaps not least, by the encouragement of industrial employment; but I think in this respect they would have done still more had they directed their attention *mainly* to the manufacture of articles which they themselves could have purchased for the clothing of the naked. I believe they would have thus obtained the most suitable articles for their purpose, and have obviated the great difficulty which has existed in finding a market for the goods manufactured through their instrumentality. Throughout Erris there exists a native manufacture of coarse woollen cloth: a stimulus to its manufacture would prove of the highest benefit, and give a supply of warm material to any Clothing Association who might turn their attention to that district. And here I would observe that the want of clothing is only equalled by the want of food; this struck me most forcibly in portions of Sligo and Mayo, in some parts of which I saw several full-grown children entirely naked, and many poor women and girls whose clothing consisted of a single thin garment, and great boys, partially covered by a long-tailed coat. The poor generally may be said to be without bed-clothes.

Such, then, appear to me to be the means at our command for the relief of the inhabitants of Connaught during the coming winter; but it is of the highest importance that immediate steps should be taken to make that great storehouse of wealth—the soil—available for the feeding of the starving multitudes. It is most distressing to think what sufferings have been endured by the past generations of the Irish people—as well as by the present—what numbers of lives have been sacrificed or shortened by the unwillingness or inability of the owners of property to discharge the commonest duties belonging to their position.

Throughout Connaught a large portion of the estates remain in the hands of families who have possessed them for centuries ; but their real value has long since been obtained and spent by the predecessors of the present nominal owners. The relation of landlord and tenant is, in truth, lost ; in no country in the world are these duties less recognised than in Ireland. The estates are entailed and they cannot be sold to pay the encumbrances, they are, in general, deeply mortgaged, often in the hands of the mortgagees, or in chancery,* and neither of these parties, though they may collect and retain four-fifths of the profit of the estate, have the slightest sympathy with the tenant, or feel called upon for any other service than the exaction of their legal claim from the miserable tenantry. The embarrassed landlord has, of course, no money to expend upon improvements, his apparent interest is to extort the highest possible rent from the estate. It would be utterly unjust to blame a great portion of the present landlords for not discharging the duties of ownership, when their circumstances entirely disable them from doing so. I bear a most willing testimony to the kind-hearted and zealous efforts of not a few of this class during the late season of trial. They are fully sensible of the anomalous position in which they are placed, and heartily desire to be freed from responsibilities which they cannot discharge ; and I found it to be the settled conviction of many, that the steps which affect this object are at the root of all permanent improvement for Ireland. The tenant is entirely thrown upon his own resources, but under circumstances which are certain to depress all well directed energy ; he builds a cabin upon the bare, untilled bog, and often pays a rent which would be amply sufficient if the land were cultivated ; and when he has laid out upon it years of toil, hoping to find in it a home and a resting-place for the remainder of his days, he too

* The estates in chancery are notoriously ill-managed and neglected, the only power which appears to be exercised by this court is that of exacting the uttermost farthing of rent. The tenants in consequence become degraded, and left to themselves, let and sublet, to their own great injury and that of the estate. When, therefore, a sale takes place, or the estate comes to the heir, and the proprietor wishes to make improvements, he commences by evicting the small tenantry, who, cast out without the means of support, brood over their misfortunes, and in the end sometimes commit murder. Many melancholy instances of this might be stated.

often finds himself deprived of both, and driven an outcast upon the earth, without sustenance or shelter for himself or little ones, or any hope of obtaining the future means of support.* Is it too strong language to speak of this state of society as being vicious and rotten; and have not as great mischiefs resulted from it to Ireland, as would arise from a system of law by which bankrupt merchants, manufacturers, or bankers, were maintained in a position which obstructed the operation of sound commercial and monetary proceedings? Then there is the system of "middle-men," the evils of which, though as respects the relation of landlord and tenant they may have sometimes been over-rated, have hardly been sufficiently estimated with reference to the sale of land. We hear much of the anomalous and mysterious condition of Ireland; but if any man had given to him these elements of her real state, and were called upon to solve the problem of what would be her condition, he could hardly work out a

* John Leslie Foster, Esq., M.P., an Irish landlord, in his examination before the Select Committee of the House of Lords in 1825, thus states his views upon the subject of *the uncertainty of tenure*:—"From the last mentioned cause particularly, the poor peasant, having, in many instances only a verbal agreement for his ground, is deterred from making any improvement in his condition, by the knowledge, founded on experience, that if he improve his farm or build a better cabin, he will, most likely, *without any remuneration* for his expenditure, be turned out of possession, or be forced to undertake an increased rent; nor will *even a lease always secure* him the occupation during the period for which it is granted; as, in many instances, landlords, being tenants for life, or bound up by settlements, make leases to their tenants for terms which they are not entitled to grant, and if the tenant make improvements, the farm becomes an object of cupidity to the heir, a flaw is found in the title, and the wretched tenant is plundered of his property and his labour, and is turned adrift without mercy. In many instances it has occurred that a set of tenants have taken uncultivated poor ground at the foot of a mountain, at a few shillings an acre rent, but *without leases*; being either deceived by promises, or unable to pay for the leases when taking the land. After a few years, by almost incessant labour, the ground being rendered of some value, these poor people have been forced to leave their farms, and remove higher up the mountain, to begin again upon unimproved land; and it is no fiction to state that those who began to cultivate the soil at the foot of a mountain, have, by progressive removals, been ultimately placed as near the top as subsistence could be raised; being thus defrauded of the fruits of their early hard labour, and obliged to end their days in want, after spending their lives in toil and pinching misery, having this additional mortification, of daily seeing the ground they had in their youth brought into cultivation occupied by others."

more favourable result than that which Connaught at this day presents; and I believe it is no less the duty than the interest of all classes in England to call upon our legislature to remove every law from the statute-book, in connexion with land, which in any manner obstructs those changes in the position of its holders which naturally result from the *actual loss* of property; and not only to remove these impediments, but also to enact laws, notwithstanding the opposing interests of the legal profession, which will effectually simplify the transfer of real property in Ireland.* If, when the reckless landowners of past days had really become bankrupt, their lands could have been sold for the payment of their debts, they would have been purchased, in all probability, by persons who had the means, and whose interest it would have been to improve them. Had this healthy action taken place, Ireland might now have enjoyed the blessing of a respectable middle class, and instead of being, as she is, an encumbrance and a disgrace to the United Kingdom, she would have been able to provide for her own wants, she would have been a large customer to our or her own manufactures, and would have supplied her fair quota to the imperial treasury.

I would not be understood as asserting that this is the only prescription for the diseases of Ireland, or that its adoption would immediately remove all the complicated evils of

* Whilst these pages have been going through the press, I have seen, with no little satisfaction, the able and just remarks made by various members of the Government upon the condition of Ireland, and the necessity of a change of those laws which affect the owners of property, and the important relation of landlord and tenant. Lord John Russell has himself declared "That he attaches 'the highest importance' to a bill for facilitating the sale of encumbered estates, and that in his opinion 'one of the greatest evils of Ireland is the nominal possession of estates by persons who have no means of improving them, or doing them justice.' * * * 'In many instances, persons in that situation, having large estates without the means of improving them, would be able, by selling a part, to make the remainder more valuable.' * * * 'With reference to emigration, I have generally held that emigration is useful as a subsidiary measure in some respects, but I do not believe that there is that over-population in Ireland which some persons allege. I believe that if agriculture, which is the great branch of industry to that country, were to be pursued with skill and science, there exists the means in Ireland of supporting, not only as great, but even a greater population than it has hitherto done."— *Times*, Nov. 25th, 1847.

her social condition, connected as they are with ages of civil and religious oppression ; and least of all should we expect that the evils arising from the moral degradation of the people would be at once removed. But admitting that the peasantry of Ireland must, in several respects, rank low in the scale of moral character, I do not think that their improvement is hopeless, or that their condition presents insurmountable obstacles to their advancement in the scale of society. But this question of the character of the poorer classes has so important a bearing on the consideration of the possibility of improving their condition, and it is so frequently urged as a bar to all efforts on their behalf, that I cannot refrain from considering it more at length.

Being much more acquainted with the peasantry of Donegal and of Connaught than with other parts of Ireland, the following remarks will mainly refer to these districts. I believe that all will admit that the Irish peasant is very capable of generous impulses, that his perceptive faculties are quick, and that he is ready in the acquirement of knowledge. It is also generally admitted that his attachment to his family, and the sacrifices which he makes for them, are not exceeded by any peasantry in the world. It is doubtful whether any other people would have endured their late terrible privations with equal patience and submission to the laws. The chief charges which are made against the Irish peasant are, that he is "ignorant," "indolent," "reckless," and "brutal."

1st. No one can doubt that as respects the knowledge of the arts of reading or writing, he is very deficient : for the removal of this defect the Irish National School system * is doing much, and has already proved the readiness and the capability of the Irish children to learn. It is needful only to visit a second-rate school, to convince oneself that an Irish child, from the poorest class, is an apt and a clever scholar ; and I cannot avoid thinking, that in conversing with an Irish peasant, you frequently find him more capable of exercising the thinking faculty than is the case with the greater portion of our own peasantry. His ignorance, therefore, does not appear to be an impediment to his future improvement.

* The National School system has done much, and it might have done much more had all classes joined heartily in its support ; and it is much to be deplored that an opposition has been manifested which daily prevents the education of thousands, even in the knowledge of Scripture truth.

Increased attention to the education of the poorer classes, is, however, very much needed.

2nd. The next charge in the indictment against the poor Irishman is that of "indolence." I have endeavoured particularly to investigate the truth of this and the following allegation, and I am of opinion that they cannot be maintained to an extent which justifies the conclusion, that he is not and cannot be made a most important agent in increasing the wealth and happiness of the country. A people who for centuries have not had the opportunity of exercising themselves in remunerative labour, must have acquired habits unfavourable to that continuous arduous toil which marks, under widely different circumstances, the English labourer: nor must we forget that the physical condition of a people living as the Irish cottier has done, is likely to be different to that of a man much better fed, clothed and housed. These views are fully supported by the labour performed by the Irish upon their own railways, as well as upon public and private works in England. An engineer upon one of the Irish railways, who was asked whether the Irish labourer would perform as much work as an English one, replied, "Yes, when they get plenty of beef into them;" and I found upon inquiry that more than *ninety per cent.* of the hands upon the Irish railways were natives. The quantity of uncultivated land in the province of Connaught, said by the Report of Lord Devon's Commission to be easily capable of improvement, is enormously large, and at the same time the number of starving labourers is not less considerable. These two facts are sometimes quoted as proving that the people will not work; but it has never yet been shown that a fair opportunity has been offered to the human instrument to turn over and make fruitful these wilderness districts. But all the experiments which have recently been made, whether in the cultivation of the soil or in home manufactures, rebut the charge of the unwillingness of the poor people to labour. The experiment in the cultivation of flax on the farms of Sir R. O'Donnell, and the general testimony which I received from the few parties who are engaged in any agricultural improvements, are decidedly in favour of the readiness of the people to work even at from 4d. to 8d. per day. Again, the ease with which the females have entered upon the spinning of flax, as well as the success which has attended the benevolent efforts of ladies and others in remote parts, in the

employment of the poor in weaving, abundantly show how anxious the poor of Connaught are to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.

Let us now look at the Irishman in England : accustomed as he has been for generations to visit this country, to assist in reaping our harvests, in order to provide clothing for himself and family, and to make up the deficiency of his other means in paying his rent. He practises, during his sojourn in this country, unwearied industry and the greatest frugality. He, in general, conducts himself with propriety, and not unfrequently gives evidence of a sense of justice and honour which is highly creditable. I know a large farmer in Holderness, who, for fifty years, has been in the habit of employing Irish labourers, chiefly from Mayo, and who has seen, at least, two generations of workmen of the same families, who declares they have never been guilty of an act of dishonesty whilst dwelling upon his premises with everything open to them. A friend of mine in Leicestershire, who has also long been in the habit of employing a large number of reapers, bears a very similar testimony. In 1846 he received a letter from one of these poor Connaught men, stating that he and his usual companions were unable to raise the means of transporting themselves to England, and entreating him to send them a pound or two, to bring some of them over. He ventured upon this risk, and had no reason to regret it. His correspondent and a party of his neighbours soon made their appearance, and faithfully discharged their debt by their labour : and as soon as they could, they transmitted their earning to their friends at home, to bring a further supply of labourers to the English harvest. A farmer in Lincolnshire last year, at the completion of his harvest, and when his Irish labourers had departed, found that he had paid them a sovereign more than their due : a friend of his, to whom he mentioned the circumstance, said, jokingly, " You'll never see your money or your Irish friends again ; " but in a very few days he had a letter from Liverpool, containing a post-office order for £1, with a statement that on making up their accounts they discovered that he had paid them too much by this amount.

Other instances of a similar kind have come to my knowledge during the present year. A party of men called upon a farmer for whom they had been in the habit of working in previous years. He was from home, but his wife informed

them that they had already engaged a sufficient number ; she however invited them to partake of some dinner by the way, which they gratefully accepted ; and as they went along the road from the house, seeing a small field of corn, belonging to the farm, which wanted cutting, they put in their sickles, completed the reaping, and passed on without waiting for any acknowledgment. There are still other honourable traits of character which the conduct of Irishmen in England strikingly exhibits ; and in this, be it observed, they are not influenced by the circumstances which surround them. I have already said that these "reckless creatures" are generally frugal ; but during the past year, when they have flocked to this country in unusual numbers, to escape from the starvation which awaited them at home, they appear to have been more than ordinarily careful in their expenditure, and to have transmitted every farthing which they could spare to their miserable families or friends at home. Many hundreds were employed in the neighbourhood of York in hoeing the chicory during the summer—in the autumn at the harvest—and now they are engaged in the gathering of the chicory. It may be safely asserted that their general conduct has been sober and inoffensive. The obtaining of means for their own and their families' present and future support has evidently been the great object of their pursuit. The records of the post-office afford the strongest and most gratifying confirmation of this statement. Through the liberality of the post-master I have been able to ascertain correctly the sums transmitted to Ireland by these poor Irish labourers, who are chiefly from Connaught, during the ten months of the present year (1847). These sums, varying from 2s. 6d. to £5., amount in the whole to *no less a sum than one thousand and forty-two pounds, ten shillings and twopence*, and have been obtained in eight hundred and sixty-six orders.* These are the people who are so often said to be reckless of property, and who require to be taught by our English labourers the principle and habit of self-reliance.

I had hoped to have given you an accurate report of the amounts transmitted from England, by the poor Irish, to their friends in the county of Mayo, by means of post-office

* These sums, as well as those mentioned afterwards, have been very carefully separated from the amounts paid on business accounts, or remitted by charitable associations or individuals.

orders, during the first ten months of the present year. I regret that I am not able to do this; but from such returns as have been kindly furnished me from Ireland, I believe it may safely be estimated that not less than twenty thousand pounds have been sent to this single county, by her hard-working sons and daughters, who fled to England from the famine.*

These facts are sufficient to rebut that charge of utter indolence and recklessness which are daily brought against the poor men of Connaught; but their defence cannot be dismissed without a brief glance at their conduct as emigrants. In a journey through a great portion of Canada and the United States, in 1845, I frequently made inquiry relative to the character and conduct of Irish settlers: I found them, in the first place, working hard with the adventurers who were carrying capital and skill into the far West, and steadily labouring upon the canals and railways, which the enterprising inhabitants of a New World are forming. Travelling on the railways which had just penetrated the native forest—in the temporary huts of the labourer by the roadside—I generally found Irish emigrants. I learned, upon inquiry, that (although a large number continued in the lowest and most menial labours) a great proportion of the Irish rose in the scale very much in the same way as others; and all agreed that in the second generation they ranked in the class of respectable citizens.

The Irish emigrants are, no doubt, as a class, inferior in moral habits and in mental and physical cultivation to most other settlers; but in a capability to acquire knowledge, and in a general readiness to labour, every one to whom I spoke upon the subject bore testimony to their full equality. But whilst admitting the dark shades in the moral character of the poor neglected Irishman, whether at home or as a stranger in other lands, we must not forget, while repelling the charge of utter recklessness, the constancy of his domestic attachments and the sacrifices which he makes to assist his perishing

* The sums sent by emigrants from America to this county would, I have no doubt, amount to fully as much. A shopkeeper in the miserable town of Belmullet assured me that during eight months of the past year he had negotiated £1400, and that his commission for the trouble of forwarding it was 3d. to 4d. in the pound. Some of the poor creatures who had fled from the country in his debt had most honorably remitted to him sums of money to liquidate his claims (1848).

brethren.* The sums which for many years have been regularly sent over by the emigrants, to enable their friends at home to exist, or to follow them to the "better land," have, it is well known, been enormous. During the pressure of

* For the following letter from an emigrant to his wife I am indebted to a friend at Liverpool, to whose care it was entrusted, together with a bill of exchange for ten pounds.

Baltimore, 16th of Febury, 1848.

Dear Judy,

My Letters to you is good; thanks be to the Lord I am in good health, but yours to my sorrow is not the best. But I trust in the Lord that you and the children is in good health now, and if the Lord took any of them from you do not be sorrow, for you and I could not do for them as well; as for me, Dear Judy, I am doing for ye as well as I can. I send home this 10 pound; I hope that it will not be long untill I send for ye all. I would make aragements to send for some of ye, But I expect to bring ye all from Liverpool. I would rather ye would be all Together than to seperate ye from each other. You will be as carefull as you can about this money, for perhaps I might get a chance before a month. I could not make up as much as could take ye from Galway. You will let me know how the passage is in Galway. If you can you will let me know how much would take ye to Liverpool, for I reckon its there I must bring ye from. You will write to me as soon as you can after you getting this. The steamer Leaves Liverpool every Saturday, so do not Delay. You will send me all paticulars about the children, for I am very uneasy until I hear from ye; if any of them Dead, do not denied of me. Dear Judy, I am as well as any man, but the uneasiness for you and the children is wearing me; as for Diet there is no Comparing to it. You will send me account how my Dear Mother is. I will send her a letter before long. You will send me accounts how is all my enquiring friends, but more Particular my friend James Mc Donough and his family. Any time he wishes to know any thing a Bout this Country let him write to me. I hope that Mr. Fary and family is well, Margret Conner and Mary Bird, and their family. I wish the were here. You will let me know Did Edward Burke write home scince he went, or where is he in a Merica. I hope that Thomas Mc Donough and his family is well. I send my best respects to Mr. Curtin. I know if he was in any place in a Merica that he could do well. I meet a great Deal of Irish here. Dear Judy, I hope that William and Mary will write to me. I hope that my fine children is all Together. I hope that the are going to school. William, be a good Boy; I am doing my best to get ye all here. We are all very clean here; every one in this Country wash their faces and comes their hair three times a day.

No more at present, but

remains your Loving Husband,
JOHN O'CONNOR.

Mark Hughes is in good health, you will tell his mother. Direct your letter to John O'Connor, Carpenter, No. 5, Camden St., Baltimore, State of Mary Land.

the year 1846 the remittances amounted to no less a sum than one million of dollars, or £200,000 ; and I understand that during the first half of the present year the remittances have been on a vastly increased scale, amounting to one million six hundred thousand dollars.

We may confidently ask, is this the conduct of a people without industry, self-reliance, or the kindest feelings of our nature ? If it be said, as it may with truth be said, that the Irishman in America is moulded by the circumstances that surround him, is it not equally true that he is moulded in Ireland by the circumstances which attend him there ? We do not attempt to prove that the Irishman is what he should be, but rather to show of what he is capable. In the social condition of Ireland, the capital and skill of a middle class are absent ; there are few to sympathize with or to direct the working part of the community, and there is on their part a want of confidence in the justice of those who are above them. A most intelligent and excellent friend of mine, in Ireland, by no means disposed to underrate the faults of his poor countrymen, made this, to me, striking observation : "It must be admitted that the first step you have to take in working upon the poor people, is to convince them that you really mean to act towards them with '*common honesty*.'" Do not these words point to one of the great sources of the evils of Ireland ? It is justice, not as it is expounded by noisy politicians, but as exhibited in the daily intercourse of men, that is so much wanted. The bad cultivation of the little holdings of the farmer may be in no inconsiderable degree attributed to his want of confidence in reaping the fruits of improved cultivation. He tells you that if he improve his ground, his rent will be immediately raised, so as to leave him in the same destitute condition as before. Much has been said of the non-cultivation of the little plots of ground in Mayo, during the past year, as proving the idleness of the cottiers. When they were urged last spring to dig their ground and put in the seed, the apprehension that their crops would be swept away for rent, and thus bring no food for their own support, added greatly to their discouragement. If, therefore, they could obtain money upon the public works, the temptation was too strong for their moral feelings. We have seen that these apprehensions were, in many cases, too well grounded.*

* The eager rushing of multitudes of farmers to the public roads, &c.,

We come now to consider the charge of "brutality" made against the Irish, and the consequent uncertainty of life, even to those who are engaged in seeking their improvement. This is truly a serious charge, and cannot be altogether denied: it is lamentable to think that there are in any part of Ireland men who can be hired to imbrue their hands in the blood of their neighbours. The assassinations which have recently taken place, have justly excited the feelings of strong indignation toward the actors in these scenes of blood; they have, however, led to a far too general imputation upon the Irish character, and have unduly discouraged the introduction of capital and enterprise into some parts of Ireland. "It will be found, upon a careful examination into the locality of the acts of violence which have been committed, that they are limited to certain counties and districts, and that they leave the major part of Ireland as unstained with the crime of murder as many parts of England." Assassination is very unusual in the greater portion of Connaught: Leitrim and Roscommon (in which such fearful instances have just occurred) form the exceptions. In Ulster and Leinster, with the exception of two or three counties, it is also equally rare. Munster, generally speaking, is the seat of those horrible outrages which have made all Ireland appear a land of terror and bloodshed; but in many parts even of this province a man may pursue his ordinary calling with entire security. Whilst in Tipperary, I met with the Manager of one of the extensive Mining Companies in that county, who had fourteen hundred men in his employ, and I heard from him what I did not anticipate in Tipperary,—a very high character of the conduct and steady industry of the men in his service, whose earnings amounted to from 9s. to 12s. per week. This gentleman had not the slightest apprehension of any personal insecurity. Although my visit to the province of Munster was too brief to allow me to speak from much personal observation, the information I obtained from all classes and parties, even from some intimately connected with the victims of the late murders, went to prove that most of the cases of outrage which disgrace this province have been connected with the tenure of land, or the relation of landlord and tenant. There have no doubt been cases which derive no shade of apology from the imperfection of

at a pittance of from 6d. to 8d. per day, has always appeared to me a strong evidence of the very small fruits which they derive from their own labours.

the existing system or the conduct of landowners, and which can only be traced to the lowest possible condition of the moral feelings, brought perhaps more easily into action by the disorganized state of society. These cases may, I understand, generally be traced to men not in the lowest circumstances, who are wicked and base enough to make the distress of others the pretext for their own villany.

In Roscommon I know that assassinations have taken place in connexion with the system of eviction, and far as I am from extenuating these murders, or sympathising with any movement which aims at the destruction of the rights of property, I cannot but think that the system of clearing away the population of a district is also a violation of the great principles of justice and humanity, on which law ought ever to be founded. Certainly some important modifications of the existing relations of landlord and tenant are imperatively called for. Neither is there any time to lose in the adoption of measures for the purpose of establishing an equitable and well-defined system of tenant right. For while we are to-day able to define the geographical limits of insecurity of life in Ireland, it is by no means certain, in connexion with the present distress, if the prevalent system of seizure and eviction should continue, how soon the peaceable men of Donegal and Mayo may be led into the commission of acts of outrage.

With reference to these views of the character of the Irish peasantry, as well as affording the strongest evidences of the practicability of employing them in the improvement of their own soil, and thereby effectually suppressing unlawful combination and outrage, we may refer to actual experiments.

The Minutes of examination before the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland, in 1825, will supply the inquirer with several striking examples; none of them more important than that afforded by the examination of John Leslie Foster, Esq., M.P., an extensive landowner in the county of Kerry. Upon coming to his estate, he says, "I was very much struck, on visiting the country, with the barbarism, pauperism and misery, and I may add the insubordination, of all persons connected with that part of the country." The estate was sublet to a middleman, and came into the owner's hands by the failure of the middleman to pay his rent. The evidence proceeds—

"I determined to try the experiment of *setting* to those families, dividing the property among them, and giving each a lease of twenty years. I had

a survey made, and explained to the people my object and intentions, which they were very slow to believe; they could scarcely comprehend them, and would hardly believe that I intended to behave so liberally to them. The neighbouring gentry saw what was going forward with great dissatisfaction; they were unanimous in predicting the failure of the experiment. I however proceeded, and "set" to the *occupying tenantry* at rents rather greater than the middleman ought to have paid me, but fully one-third less than they were bound to pay him. When they saw that I was in earnest, they entered very fully into my plan. One of the greatest difficulties that had been anticipated by my neighbours was, that the people would not consent to the separation of companies; there was, however, no practical difficulty of that kind experienced; the land was divided; they even threw down in many instances the little cluster of hovels in which they had lived, and built good houses for themselves with very little assistance from me. For six half-years after my dividing the property they paid their rent with the greatest punctuality; there was no default whatever; and I am persuaded they would have continued to do so, but for the circumstances that attended the autumn of 1821 in that part of Ireland, when Captain Rock interfered with that property as well as others. However, they have renewed their payments, and within the last twelve months I have got a full year's rent from them, and I have no doubt they will go on paying it. This experiment has convinced me of the practicability and facility of introducing the English system of tenure into any part of Ireland, even when appearances are the most unfavourable.

"I have been there so lately as last summer, and the results have exceeded all my expectations. I think the greater part of the year's rent, which I conceive the insurrectionary spirit of the South has operated to deprive me of, was employed in bettering their condition. Their houses, furniture, food, clothes, and stocks of cattle and pigs, are quite superior to anything in their neighbourhood. THERE IS NOT A PAUPER ON THE PROPERTY."

Another example in the same county is furnished by the admirable proceedings of the late Lord Headley, an account of which was published in a pamphlet by his agent.*

No district of Ireland could present more serious obstacles to improvement than did the estate of Glenbegh, consisting of about 15,000 acres, when Lord Headley determined to undertake its improvement.

"And such was the character of the inhabitants for ferocity, that every traveller dreaded attack, and assumed a posture of defence as he made his way between the river and a frowning cliff which overhangs it, then the only pass into the extensive districts to the west.

"The glen was, at that time, supposed to be a place of safe retreat to every offender who fled from justice—for there all pursuit terminated. The inhabitants allowed no person to be conducted through it as a prisoner; and it was their boast that none were ever punished who had taken refuge in its fastnesses.

* 'Hints to Irish Landlords, on the best means of obtaining and increasing their Rents, improving their Estates, and bettering the conditions of the People,' by John Wiggins.

“They were looked upon by the rest of the country as savages, and treated as people amongst whom there was no security but in superior force. This feeling was far from being softened on those melancholy occasions when shipwrecks occurred on the coast, during which nothing but an armed force could prevent every vestige of property being plundered by these and the neighbouring people. As to taxes, cesses, or other public dues, it may be imagined that the people lived nearly free from those imposts, for the king’s hearth-money was abandoned because of the difficulties attending its collection, although the officers appointed to that duty were supported by troops. The habitations of these mountaineers were the lowest order of huts, scarcely affording room to the inmates, and quite inadequate to the purpose of shelter.

“Such were the people of that country, when Lord Headley, having then recently come of age, for the first time visited this portion of the extensive family estate in Ireland. His lordship at once saw that the deplorable state of these people was *chiefly owing to a long course of neglect*. He resolved, therefore, to *cultivate their good qualities without being at first very eager to punish their bad ones*; these he wished to subdue by the progress of improvement, so that the culture of the people might keep pace with that of the soil; and he has succeeded in establishing, within fifteen years, a degree of improvement and civilization, which, without these efforts, must have required a century.”

One of the first measures taken was *to employ the people* in making roads for an easy communication to their respective farms and to the sea coast, for the purpose of procuring manure. The people, unused to labour, at first proceeded slowly and unskilfully,—soon, however, they became expert—inducements were offered to them for the improvement of their dwellings, and a considerable number of new houses were built of stone, with chimneys, windows, &c.; small gardens were walled in, trees planted and fences made, and the old hovels given to the cattle, which were banished the family dwelling. In the course of a few years the character of the people appeared changed, and from a band of outlaws they became a well-ordered community. A most severe trial of their character occurred in the year 1821, when Whiteboyism was at its height. At this period the tenantry, of their own accord, held a meeting, and passed resolutions expressing

“Their detestation of the savage cruelties and barbarous murders which have been perpetrated in our neighbouring districts, and the lawless efforts which have been made to introduce disorder and confusion into our parish.”

They further solemnly declare—

“That we have not associated ourselves with any combination or nocturnal meeting, and that we will to the utmost of our power, repel and discountenance any attempts that may be made to interfere with the peace and tranquillity we at present enjoy.”

Further, they say—

“We return our most sincere thanks and unfeigned gratitude to our landlord, for so consulting our welfare as to render it unnecessary and inexpedient for us to make ourselves a party to the violation of the laws of our God or of our country.”

It may be stated, that they kept their solemn promises, and, what is not a little remarkable, the surrounding insurrectionary parties never attempted to compel them to unite with them, and are said to have declared, that if they were Lord Headley's tenants they would not be such fools as to have any connexion with Whiteboyism. This was but six years after the commencement of the new system at Glenbegh.

Every word of these statements may be said to convey instruction and reproof. What was done by Foster and Lord Headley might have been done by other landowners with similar success. Their experiments revealed no hidden and mysterious agency by which savages were to be tamed. They did but illustrate the power of well-known principles,—of common humanity, common justice and common sense. Neither were they the first landowners who acted upon these principles and proved their power. Many similar experiments, attended with similar success, had been previously made; and from the period of Lord Headley's experiment to the present time, there has not been wanting additional testimony of a like kind, to the practicability of raising the character of the most degraded portions of the Irish people, and improving, through their agency, the value of the soil. One of these testimonies, supplied by the admirable proceedings of Lord George Hill, must be referred to. His little book of ‘Facts from Gweedore’ is well known, and deserves to be more so. The contrast which is presented to the traveller between Lord George Hill's estate and that of the adjoining one, belonging to the Marquis of Conyngham, is a most striking illustration of the working of two opposite systems; and never, perhaps, could the contrast between them be seen to greater advantage than when I visited them in the midst of the sufferings of last winter. The poor tenants of Gweedore were indeed suffering: they, as well as their neighbours, had lost the crop on which they chiefly depended; but they had still some property—some cows and a little corn—and they had a store well provided with all suitable articles of food and clothing, and where everything they produced could be disposed of at a fair price.* Very different

* Previously they had to travel nearly thirty miles to a market.

was the condition of their miserable neighbours ; on the one estate there was the means of preserving life, on the other there was not. At Dunglow, a town on the Marquis's property, there was literally no meal the day before I was there, and the family of the Protestant clergyman knew not that they should have bread to eat the next day. A troop of miserable creatures, men, women and children, half naked in the midst of the snow, had come from their hovels in the mountains to know whether they would be kept alive ! A cart was despatched to Lord G. Hill's store at Gweedore, a distance of twenty-five miles, twenty of which were through the estate of the Marquis, to see if meal was to be had there ! It was uncertain whether the vehicle could cross the mountains over which it must pass, so deeply covered were they with snow. It was also uncertain whether, if meal were found at the store, a supply could be spared for those who had made no provision for this time of need. All these doubts, however, were favourably solved. A supply arrived, but it could not meet half the wants of the starving people. No sudden effort of charity could by possibility meet them. Multitudes perished from starvation during the winter, not because the land could not have supplied their needs—not because the people would not work it—but because it was subjected to a system opposed to common humanity, common justice and common sense. The Marquis of Conyngham's estate, be it remembered, is not spoken of as a singular instance of neglect, but only as an example, on a large scale, of the condition of a great portion of the property of Ireland.

What are we doing in England to suffer such a state of things to continue in our sister island ? Does her waste soil owe no duties to us and to her own children ? The fealty of her people we are perpetually debating, and annually expending millions to maintain ; but the fealty of her soil—by which millions might be brought into the private and public coffers of the nation, by which the miserable paupers of Ireland might be raised to comparative independence, and the instruments of war, now deemed needful to coerce her, might be converted into ploughshares and reaping-hooks—excites but little interest in the English mind.

In offering this view of the character and condition of the Irish people, I wish to guard myself against being misunderstood on three points. First. I would not have it supposed, from the statements which I have made in behalf of the poor Irishman, that I consider him as free from faults, bearing

considerably on his present depressed and miserable condition. He has indeed great faults, for many of which, much as they may be traced to the influence of circumstances, he must be held responsible. I know there are many idle worthless cottiers and farmers who neither discharge their duties to their families nor to their landlords; there are, no doubt, tenants who have availed themselves of the general distress to withhold the payment of rent, though they have had the means of paying it. Our knowledge of human nature, as it is seen in our own country, would lead us, under the circumstances of Ireland, to expect such occurrences, if we knew nothing of the character of the people. All that I assert respecting the Irish peasantry, and which I think the evidence here adduced goes far to establish, is, that they are not the helpless vagabond intractable people which they are often said to be; but that, on the other hand, amidst all their faults, they have many excellent features of character;—that they are capable of being raised in their moral and physical condition, and that under proper treatment they would work hard and supply an amazing amount of capital for the development of the dormant riches of Ireland's soil and sea.

Secondly. In speaking as I have done, respecting the eviction of tenants in Ireland, the reader will observe that I speak of it as a system generally involving the wholesale clearance of families, who on being removed have no means of support. I would by no means be understood to maintain that the present occupier obtains a right of occupation in perpetuity, and that a landlord has no right to discharge a tenant. And I wish to assure the reader, that in the remarks which have been made upon the character and circumstances of landlords in Ireland, no other motive has influenced me, than the desire to promote, by speaking the truth, a right understanding of the condition of the country. When this condition is really understood in England, I believe that the application of remedies will not be long delayed; and I know that this is the conviction of many Irish proprietors.

And thirdly, I would not be misunderstood as holding out the expectation that they who enter upon any plan, on a larger or a smaller scale, for the improvement of the soil and the people, will meet with an instantaneous cooperation in all the methods they may wish to adopt. The evidence appears to me to show, that a little patience and kind firmness will generally accomplish all reasonable and honest purposes with the Irish people, even though the methods to be pursued

are in opposition to many of their prejudices. Lord George Hill's experiment is very encouraging in this respect. He succeeded in altering their oldest and most cherished habits,* with respect to the tenure of their land; indeed, he may be said to have made almost every kind of change but that of the poor tenantry themselves. They have done all that could fairly be expected; and they say that but for the improvements introduced by their good landlord, they should now be begging through the country.

The reader's attention is particularly called to the fact, that in the three experiments which have been referred to, two of them in Kerry and one in Donegal, the improvement of the estate was carried on by means of the resident peasantry. *There were no evictions, no clearances.* The capital in the labourers' muscles was brought into operation, to draw out the dormant wealth of the soil. The landlord made roads, drained and assisted in some other permanent improvements; the tenant did the rest. If each of the present small farmers in Ireland, had the opportunity of taking from ten to twenty acres of the unreclaimed land, in addition to their present little farms, at moderate rents, with proper leases, or other reasonable security, I believe that the same industry which they so successfully exhibit in other countries, might be made available, not only for their own improvement, but for the permanent benefit of the landlords. This might also probably be the most economical way of reclaiming these wildernesses and employing the people; for it is not at all impossible that the small farmer might successfully devote his now unemployed time in this manner, when the attempt might not be so profitable on a larger and more extended scale.

The contemplated improvement, however, does by no means require that Connaught should be divided into small farms. There is ample scope for large farms on her unemployed reclaimable lands, without sweeping away a single cottier or small farmer. Give the latter a fair security for the land he occupies, and, in addition to the better cultivation of his own land, he might be partially employed as a labourer by the

* Owing to entire neglect, previous to Lord G. Hill's becoming the purchaser, the inhabitants had divided and subdivided their little holdings of land until the divisions had gone on from a "cow's grass" to a "cow's foot," a "cow's toe," and a "skiberleen" (literally the shred of a coat). The land was held in "rundale." One man is stated to have had his holdings in forty different places, and despairing of ever finding his possessions he had given up the vain pursuit. With such a prospect there seemed little chance for improvement.

larger agriculturists, while the main staff of labourers would be furnished by the class heretofore mainly dependant for support upon the miserable conacre system.

Either of these plans would require the owners to furnish *the main* drainage of the land ; but if this were done I believe the tenants would, under proper direction, find the needful capital, mainly consisting of labour, for the improved cultivation of the soil. And the present time, when the dependence upon the potato has ceased, is most favourable and important for the adoption of such measures as we have been referring to.

The privilege which of all others Ireland most desires, is that of being permitted to work and cultivate her own vast wildernesses. It is permission to use capital, and not the capital itself, which Ireland stands so much in need of : whilst she has one acre of reclaimable land lying waste, every unemployed labourer is unemployed capital. How idle then does it seem, in the well-known circumstances of Ireland, to talk of emigration as the cure for her grievances !

The idea that the division of land into small occupations is incompatible with the true prosperity and happiness of the people, is rebutted by the experience of many parts of Europe. Connaught might indeed be happy if her whole area were divided and cultivated, as are the plains of Belgium or the hill sides of Tuscany. Experiments in the Highlands of Scotland seem to show that the sweeping away of the little tenantry is not attended with the benefits anticipated by the proprietor. In support of this we have but to refer to the admirable letters on the 'Condition of the Poor in the Highlands of Scotland,' which appeared some time since in the 'Times.' These exhibit in a striking manner the difference which exists in the condition of the adjoining counties of Caithness and Sutherlandshire. The latter has been converted into immense sheep-farms—thickly-peopled valleys have been deprived of their inhabitants, and fertile fields have become waste and barren—sheep are now almost the only tenants of the desolate plains of Sutherlandshire. Caithness, on the contrary, has been divided amongst a numerous body of small tenantry, occupying on an average about twenty acres each, let on moderate terms and on lease. The whole surface is said to be under cultivation, and the population actively employed at remunerative wages. Good stone cottages and neat gardens are everywhere to be seen, instead of the miserable turf-built hovels which still exist in

some parts of Sutherlandshire. While the condition of the population is thus improved, that of the landlord is not less satisfactory. Since 1815, the annual rental as assessed to the property tax has been rather more than doubled in Caithness, whilst in Sutherlandshire the increase is little more than five per cent.*

In the Scotch experiment, as well as in many Irish ones, it seems to have been assumed that we have a right to deal with human beings as if they were mere inert matter which obstructs our path; instead of considering it as an axiom that our plans must be adapted to their presence, and that every scheme for the improvement of the land is to be deemed unsound in which the first and great consideration is not the welfare and happiness of the resident population.

I feel that many apologies are due from me, for presuming to place before you, at so great a length, the views which I have taken relative to the condition of Ireland; and were it not for the valuable assistance which has been afforded me in proceeding with my task, by those in whose judgment I place the greatest confidence, this letter would not have extended so much beyond the limits of your request and my original intention. It is proper to state that you are in no way responsible for the statements or opinions contained in it. Through your introductions I became acquainted with many of your excellent correspondents, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, whose self-denying exertions justly rank them amongst the largest contributors to the relief of Ireland; and although their names may not appear in any list of its benefactors, they doubtless have their reward. How much your judicious selection of agents has enhanced the benefit of the funds entrusted by all classes to your care, is well known: in almost every place, I heard not only of the number of lives which had been saved by your grants, but also of the satisfactory manner in which they had been distributed. But whilst thus mentioning your proceedings, which have of course come more under my notice than those of other Relief Associations, I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to the immense benefit conferred through the labours of other societies, and especially by the extensive operations of the British Association. That your labours are not yet drawn to

* It is satisfactory to notice that the present Duke of Sutherland has very recently announced his intention of *repeopling* his desolate sheep-walks, and of letting them out in farms of various sizes!

a close it is needless to remark : may I be allowed to express my heartfelt desire, that when the present calamity shall have passed away, it may be found your duty to exercise the same judicious zeal for the moral and social improvement of the people, which you have so happily exerted in saving multitudes from the grave. It is a duty in which the politician and the christian philanthropist should heartily unite. It is to assist in the civilization of millions—to help to raise the most miserable population in the world from the thralldom of pauperism and superstition.

In a crisis like the present, it is matter of thankfulness that the Imperial Government is represented in Ireland by a nobleman who has proved how fully he is acquainted with its affairs, and how able he is to extend to it his enlightened counsel. It would be difficult to find words more appropriate to the present wants and duties of Ireland, than are contained in the following extract from Lord Clarendon's reply to the address of the Roman-Catholic Hierarchy, with which I will conclude my letter.

“If ever nation at any time was imperatively called upon by circumstances for united exertion, it is Ireland at the present moment; hardly emerged from a calamity which has no parallel in the annals of history, we are about to enter upon another crisis of appalling magnitude, which finds us unprepared and weakened by division. If there ever was a time when selfish feelings and party strife should be replaced by Christian charity, it is now, in the presence of a great and common danger. There is no man upon whom some duty does not devolve; and if those classes possessing influence in their respective spheres will meet together and recognize the absolute necessity of their duties being performed, and will to each apportion his share of the burden, the difficulties of all will be diminished to an extent which now appears impossible; and if the exhortations of religion, never in vain addressed to the Irish people, be heard in behalf of order, and self-sacrifice and resignation, then we may humbly hope that the blessing of the Almighty will attend efforts so made to meet the calamity which, for purposes to us inscrutable, has been permitted to fall upon this country.”

J. H. T.

York, 11th mo. 20th, 1847.

POSTSCRIPT.

EVICCTIONS IN ERRIS.

HAVING had my attention drawn to the statements made by G. P. Scrope, M.P., in the House of Commons, as reported in the 'Times' of the 12th inst. ; and also to a letter signed John Walshe, of No. 7, Hume Street, Dublin, in the 'Dublin Evening Post,' of 8th February, 1848, denying the truth or correctness of some statements made by me, relative to the evictions in Erris ; I thought it due to myself and to the cause in which I had been engaged, to proceed at once to Ireland, to ascertain on the spot the real facts of the case.

This seemed the more needful, as I was not myself upon the Walshe estates during my previous visit, but my statements respecting them were given, as clearly appears in the pamphlet, on the testimony of others. I accordingly left York on the 16th inst. (February), and arrived at Belmullet on the 20th.

I have, then, in the first place to state, that whilst the information that had been supplied me, on my former visit to Connaught, appears to have been correct, as to the service at one time of ejectments on 140 cottagers (tenants of J. Walshe), and as to the presence and operation of the military and police for this purpose, it now appears that no unroofing of the cottages took place on that day, and that comparatively few of them were unroofed at the period of my first visit. In this, therefore, and the circumstances attending these evictions in the majority of the cases stated by me to have *then* taken place, my informants were clearly wrong, and J. Walshe is consequently entitled to the full benefit of this admission. This, however, cannot be of much benefit to him ; for as will immediately appear, the unroofing of the cottages and eviction of the inhabitants took place a few

weeks subsequently, under circumstances of cruelty even exceeding those which I had described. I think it right to state in justice to myself that my information was derived when in Mayo, on my first visit, from a gentleman of the highest respectability, then resident in the county, who was recommended to me by the Government Inspecting Officer of the district, and by the Secretaries of the Central Relief Committee in Dublin, as one on whose communications I might place the fullest reliance; and in the second place, that a similar statement was contained in a letter addressed to an officer in the service of government in Dublin (from another party), who obligingly read it to me in that city on my way home. Having admitted thus much as to what I stated previously on the information supplied by others, I shall now proceed to state *what I have actually seen and heard upon the spot during the past week*, in reference to this case.

In proceeding on the 21st inst. from Belmullet to the Mullet (the scene of the eviction), I was joined by R. T. Hamilton, the Government Poor-Law Inspector, who, in the course of his official duties, was about to visit that district of Erris. He kindly allowed me to accompany him, and I thus had, from his intimate knowledge of the people, an excellent opportunity afforded me of obtaining precise information as to their condition.

At Binghamstown (the property of Dennis Bingham) I counted at least thirty roofless houses. At a village a few miles further on, held by a middle-man named Lyons, under Colonel Kirkwood, I counted fully as many. This was but the commencement of a scene of desolation and misery which no words can convey even a faint idea of.

At Tiraun, the property of J. Walshe, I counted eight or ten roofless houses very recently thrown down, out of about twenty which had composed the village, and thirteen heads of families are receiving relief under the provisions of the Poor-Law from it.

From Tiraun we proceeded to Mullaroghe, also the property of J. Walshe, which presented a scene of devastation almost beyond belief. It was literally a heap of ruins. I tried to count the roofless houses, and after proceeding as far as seventy, gave it up in despair; for not only had the roofs been thrown down, but in many cases the gable-ends and the walls of the houses demolished, so that nothing re-

mained but a heap of stones. In front of the houses still remained the manure heaps, and all around were scattered the broken remains of looms, bed-frames, stools, straw mats, crockery and rafters. The Inspecting Officer informed me that when he visited the village about three weeks previously, he saw in many houses the looms and various articles of furniture still remaining; and found in one wretched cabin, which was now roofless and uninhabited, ten people lying ill in various stages of fever and starvation. After searching about in the ruins for a considerable time, we found three houses where, as it appears by the Townlands assessment book in 1845, 102 families were rated. Seventy-two heads of families from this Townland are now receiving relief under the Poor-Law.

A few miserable objects were still lingering about this desolated village, imploring relief: they told us that about a week before Christmas and subsequently, to a very recent period, "the younger Mr. Walshe with two drivers had come and pulled down the roofs of their houses about their heads, and forced them to leave the place." Let me give this statement in the touching words of a poor woman, one among the many hundred people who were thus turned out upon the world, without shelter or means of support. Her evidence was taken down in the presence of three most respectable witnesses, one of them a clergyman of the Church of England. Lest this unfortunate victim to the eviction system should be further injured, I will not give her name. "She was living in Mullaroghe with her husband, when the young Mr. Walshe and two drivers came about ten days before Christmas. The first day they made a 'cold fire', the second day the people were all turned out of doors, and the roofs of their houses pulled down. That night they made a bit of a tent or shelter of wood and straw; that, however, the drivers threw down, and drove them from the place. She could compare it to nothing else than driving cattle to the pound. It would have pitied the sun to look at them as they had to go head foremost under hail and storm. It was a night of high wind and storm, and their wailing '*chordee*' could be heard at a great distance. They implored the drivers to allow them to remain a short time, as it was so near the time of festival (Christmas), but they would not, and were all scattered up and down the country, like sheep upon the mountains. She had lived there all her

life, also her father and the father of her mother. Her mother had died about three days *after* Christmas, from cold and hunger, in a place called Barrack, and she would not have done so had she been at home. They pulled an old chest to pieces, and made a sort of coffin, in which they buried her."

The main facts of this evidence were fully confirmed by the testimony of at least twenty distinct witnesses whom we examined. One poor man told us that his house was pulled down whilst he was absent for the relief meal, and that when he returned he found himself a homeless wanderer.

The day previously to our visit, a poor man on the sea-shore, close to this village, picking up sea-weed or shell-fish to appease his hunger, was seen to stagger and fall. Another poor man who resided near the place, went to him, and carried him into his hut, but it was too late. A friend of mine, who made a circuit of this part of the Mullet the same day as myself, found him lying dead on the sand-bank, his form worn and emaciated to the last degree. Upon inquiry the following day, it turned out that this poor man was one of the ejected tenants of Mullaroghe, and the husband of the woman whose evidence I have given above!

A little distance from Mullaroghe is the village of Clogher, also belonging to J. Walshe. Here, again, the same melancholy scenes of devastation and destruction met our view; rendered, if possible, more distressing from the very recent date of the work of demolition, as many of the houses had only just been unroofed, and scattered around them or within their naked walls, were seen various implements or articles of domestic use. Looms, fishing-nets, bedding and straw beds, bed-frames, large dressers and strong wooden chests, iron boiling-pots, crockery, &c., &c., &c., all wasting and left to ruin in the rain. Several of the families who had been evicted were still lingering around their hearths, unwilling to leave the homes of themselves and their forefathers. They were objects of the greatest misery, and almost naked. One family, consisting of a woman and four young children, presented a perfectly appalling picture, so worn and emaciated I could not bear to look at them.

Priest Moyles, who joined us here, gave a fearful account of the sufferings and misery of these poor people. He said they were scattered up and down the country, and knew not what they could do; four or five families crammed into one

house, others sleeping out all night without any other covering than the rags on their backs, or other shelter than the sky. He showed us one house about fourteen feet by twelve, into which four families were thus crowded. In 1845 sixty-two families were rated in the Town-Lands Assessment-Book in Clogher. I counted forty houses without roofs, and there are forty-six heads of families receiving relief from this townland.

Although it was not difficult to imagine the indescribable wretchedness of these poor outcasts, I was wholly unprepared for the spectacle which greeted our eyes at Aughleen, a feeding station for the districts containing Mullaroghe and Clogher, where the vice-guardian and relieving officers were vainly endeavouring to relieve the pressing necessities of these miserable people. Here were collected three or four hundred (I counted as many as 300) emaciated people in various stages of fever, starvation and nakedness; the majority of whom were the evicted tenantry of Mullaroghe and Clogher. Many, too weak to stand, were lying on the cold ground; others squatting on the bare turf to hide their naked limbs. Some of the children and old people were in a dying state, and wretched as they appeared, I was informed by the vice-guardian, who had visited every family in the district within a few days, that *the worst had not made their appearance*, as many were too ill to crawl out of their hiding-places or cabins.

Priest Moyles pointed out several parties whom he knew to sleep out at night. One was an old man near seventy, who was too weak to stand for any length of time. Another, a family consisting of a man and his wife and three children. Numbers of the people assured us that they often had to sleep out in the ditches, as it was impossible for the other houses to take them in, and if any one was sick, they would not let them in when they had room. They told us that when they could obtain shelter, four or five families were crowded into one cabin, thus no doubt spreading fever and disease in all directions. The most destitute and death-stricken objects we examined in this crowd acknowledged that they received the proper allowance of meal, but that the cold and exposure to the inclemency of the weather was killing them. *The Government Inspecting Officer* (let me call especial attention to this point), *who heard these statements, confirmed their truth, and stated further, that*

all his efforts to keep the population from starvation and death had been baffled by the system of eviction which has been and is pursuing, as there was no shelter for them anywhere, and the temporary workhouse, in course of completion at Binghamstown, could, even if ready, accommodate but a very small portion of the evicted people.

Leaving this indescribable scene, we returned to Binghamstown, visiting by the way the auxiliary temporary workhouse in course of completion. A number of the most destitute applicants had already been admitted, and a considerable number of able-bodied men were engaged in the works, having to perform a certain task for the daily allowance of meal for themselves and families.

Even here, amidst so much positive distress, the labour or workhouse test is found needful; for almost all parties, from the *owner* of 300 acres downwards, apply for relief. In the workhouse several Mullaroghe families were pointed out to me: one family, consisting of five persons, was found lying in a ditch near the poor-house (about a fortnight previously), unable to crawl any further. By the directions of the Inspecting Officer, who found them, they were carried into the house, as he thought, to die. One child had died, but the mother and other children, although little more than skeletons, were just recovering. Another poor family whom the Inspecting Officer had also found in a ditch near, too weak to crawl further, was shown me. The appearance of the mother was most striking and peculiar: her limbs and body were shrunken to the smallest possible size, and the doctor who happened to be in attendance declared that she could not weigh more than three stone. She, in common with the other inmates, exhibited great pleasure at seeing the Inspecting Officer, of whose kindness they expressed themselves in grateful terms.

Leaving the workhouse, I again proceeded to Belmullet, in the neighbourhood of which I spent some days in further verifying these facts, and thus closed a visit to scenes which it would be difficult to find equalled, even amidst the terrible wretchedness of Ireland.

It may be well to state that neither Mullaroghe nor Clogher appeared to have been villages of the poorest description; the houses, so far as I could observe, were built of stone, some were plastered outside, and such of the furniture as was scattered about bespoke a condition rather above the lowest.

The amount of rent generally owing by the unfortunate inhabitants was stated to be from one year and a half to two years, showing clearly that the loss of the potato-crop alone had caused the ruin of the inhabitants, for the land now lying entirely waste and uncultivated appeared to be of a good quality, and on the sea-shore close by, an abundance of sea-wrack might have been easily collected; even without this I think the large manure-heaps left in front of the cabins were sufficient for the whole of the land.

It appears, then, as the result of the evidence which I have been able to obtain,—

1st, That although the actual unroofing of the houses and eviction of the inhabitants did not, except in a few instances, take place immediately after the serving and execution of the process of ejectment, with the assistance of the police and military, the majority of the houses in Mullaroghe were unroofed and the tenants turned out shortly before Christmas; and that the same system has been pursued from that time until a very recent period in Clogher and Tiraun, as some of the tenants assured us that their houses had not been unroofed more than three or four days.

2nd, That a son of the proprietor and two "drivers" came, and that in the presence of the former a large number of the houses had been unroofed, subsequently thrown down, and the inhabitants expelled.

3rdly, That by the Barony Applotment-Book, 102 families were assessed in Mullaroghe in 1845; *now there are not six* houses remaining.

That in Clogher 62 families were assessed, and that at least 40 houses are now unroofed and tenantless.

That in Tiraun 20 families were assessed, and that at least 8 or 10 houses are now unroofed and tenantless.

4thly, That in Mullaroghe 72 heads of families are now receiving relief, in Clogher 46, in Tiraun 13—total 131. Besides these there are, say 9 families in the Ballina poor-house, making a total of 140 families who are at this moment receiving relief under the Poor-Law, and these from the property of a proprietor, who, although he has been twice applied to by the solicitor of the Poor-Law Guardians, had not, on the 18th inst., paid the poor-rates struck in August, 1846, or that subsequently in August, 1847, the former at 5d. and the latter at 1s. 3d. in the pound, in the electoral division of Binghamstown.

At whose expense, it will naturally be asked, is the relief now granted provided? I answer, that the funds of the British Association are feeding the children, whilst the other portions of these families are fed by means of funds placed at the disposal of the Board of Vice-Guardians from other sources than the rates.

I feel that any comment upon this simple detail of facts is uncalled for from me, and I will only add, that there is no exaggeration—no overcolouring—and that should it be needful I am fully prepared to substantiate every statement and every particular by witnesses of the highest respectability.

This eviction, the main features of which I have endeavoured to pourtray, is, I regret to say, no exaggerated representation of a system which is constantly pursued in Ireland under circumstances attended with a greater or less degree of cruelty. Surely the Government ought to extend its arm to protect the rights and interests of these wretched beings, and prevent the recurrence of similar scenes of wholesale destruction. In this case the usual forms prescribed by law appear to have been observed; but many others have no shadow of legal authority under which to shelter themselves.

J. H. T.

York, 29th 2nd mo., 1848:

NOTE.

In connexion with this subject, the subjoined statement, furnished me by a respectable solicitor in Ballina, relative to the modes of eviction pursued in the county of Mayo, deserves a careful perusal.

“The conduct of the landlords of Mayo for the last few years, in reference to the ejection of their tenantry *in particular*, has been frequently made the subject of public discussion. They have been charged with ejecting their tenants for overholding by a process of *ejectment* in the Court of the Assistant-Barrister. This charge the landlords have met by triumphantly referring to the books of the Clerk of the Peace, which they maintained did not disclose any entries of ejections brought by them for the recovery of their lands from their tenants at will. So far as the entry of an EJECTION, in the technical and legal acceptation of the term, is concerned, they are certainly correct; but this, though an *apparent*, will be found to be by no means a *substantial* refutation of the charge. The proceeding by ejectment cannot be adopted against tenants-at-will until after the expiration of the service upon them of a six-months’ “*notice to quit* ;” and this notice, to be successfully used for the purposes of eviction, must require the delivery of the premises to the landlord at the termination of some year of the tenancy. From this it will be seen that in some cases a period of almost an entire year might elapse from the service of the notice to the bringing of the ejectment. This mode of proceeding, from the circumstance of its being tedious in its nature, as well as a little complicated in its details, has latterly been seldom adopted, at least in this part of the county. The landlords can therefore, with complete success, appeal to the books of the Clerk of the Peace to prove that they are not in the habit of proceeding against their tenants by the *strict law* of ejectment.

“But there is *another mode of eviction* by a process of law from the same court, which the landlords of this county have

recently discovered, and have, by practice, made tolerably effective. The proceeding to which I now allude is by action, at the suit of the landlord against the tenant, for the use and occupation of the land. This action is commenced by a service upon the tenant, six days at least before the sitting of the Court, of what is called a *civil bill process*, signed by the landlord or his attorney, setting forth the names of the parties, the amount claimed to be due, and the period up to which the payment is sought, and requiring the defendant to appear before the Court and answer the action of the plaintiff. The Court, upon having received evidence of the tenancy and of the amount agreed to be paid for the use and occupation of the land, grants a decree, under which, at the action of the plaintiff, either the *person* of the defendant or his *chattels* may be taken in execution. The practice latterly in such actions as those has been (for the obvious purpose of clearing the land) to issue the decrees against the *persons* of the defendants. The disastrous state of the times has, for the last two years and a half, rendered it utterly impossible for the tenants to pay their rents with the same punctuality that they had hitherto done; and the landlords accordingly, acting upon the principle that they were entitled, under *every* circumstance, either to the possession of their land or the value of it, have almost universally, in the northern part of this county, proceeded against all their tenants in arrear, in the way I have stated, for recovery of the rent of the land, in most cases up to the *last gale day*. Very many of the poor tenants, upon being served with those civil bill processes, fled from the country, and thus saved the landlord the trouble and expense of proceeding farther; for they knew if they had remained, they should be obliged to pay the rent *in full*, or, if unable to do so, should either surrender their land and home to their landlord, or submit to be imprisoned under an Assistant-Barrister's decree for the amount due. Many, who had no means to enable them to leave the country or pay their rent, willingly gave up possession of their holdings, and sought admission into the work-houses, in order to escape arrest under a similar process of law. Some few, who were obstinate in keeping possession, were arrested and cast into gaol, and, upon seeking to be discharged as *insolvents*, found that they could procure their release only upon an undertaking to give up the possession of their land. Many were even detained in custody until

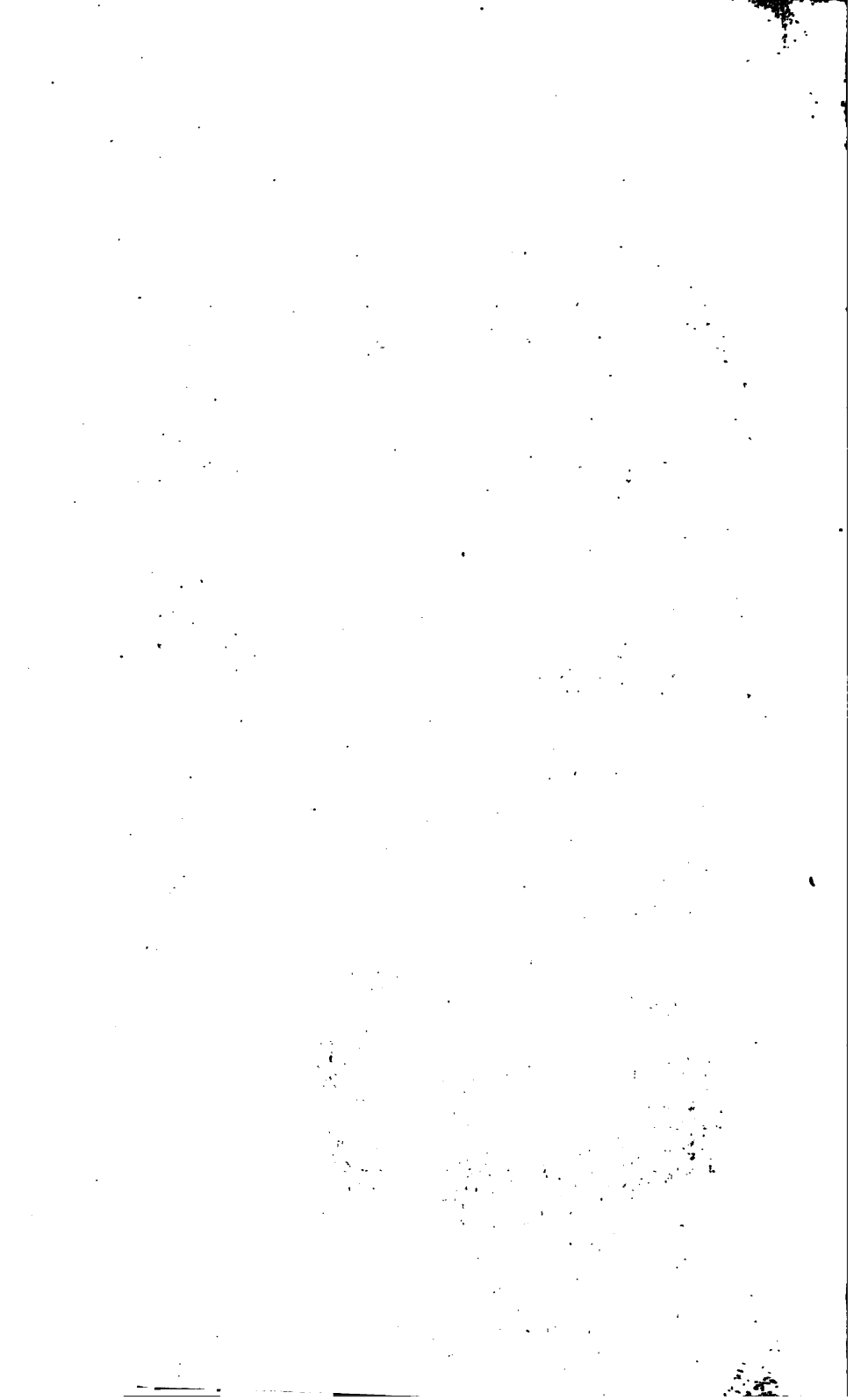
the possession had actually been handed over to the landlord, by some person authorized to do so by the wretched insolvent.

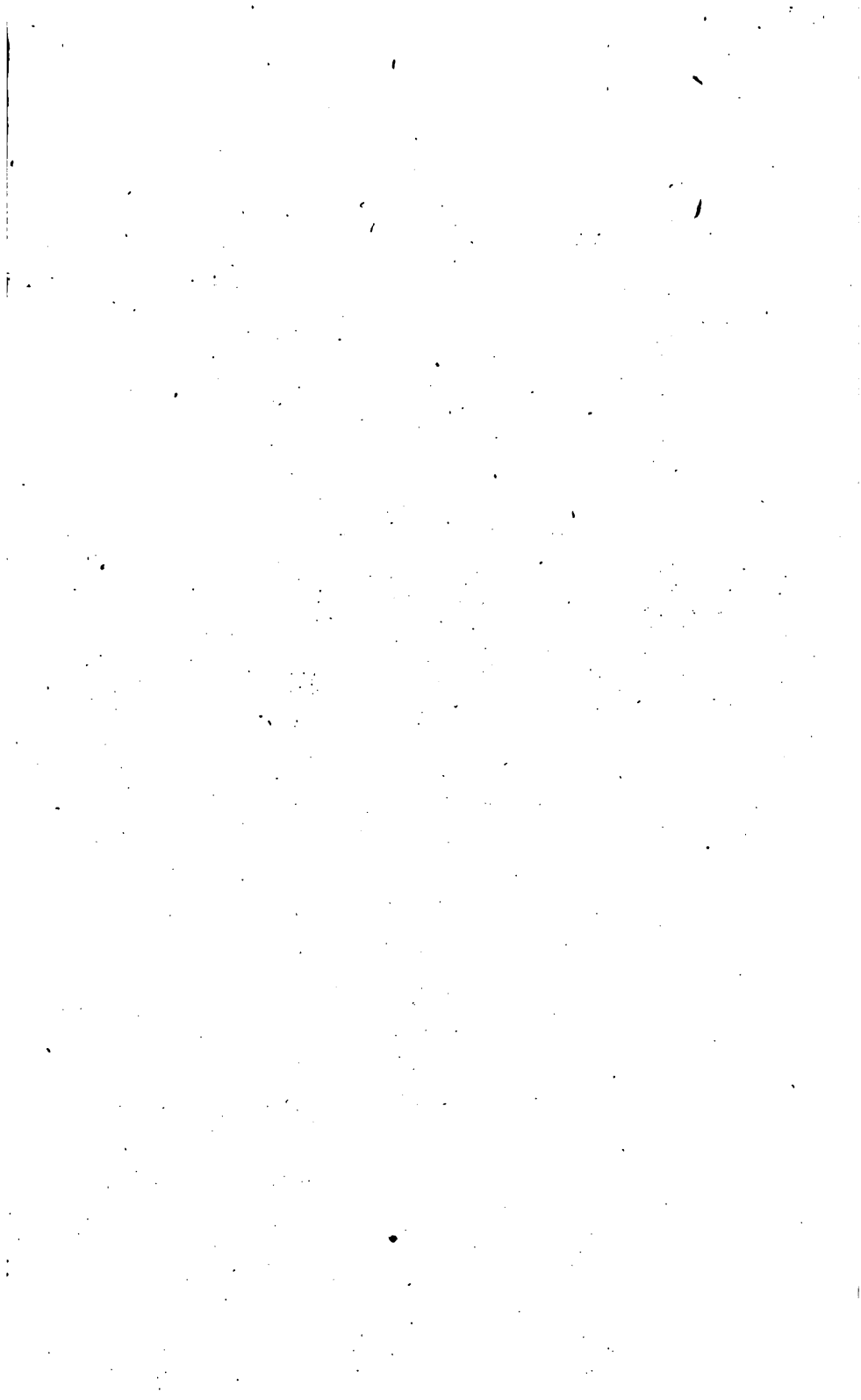
“In this manner, and by these means, have the landlords I allude to regained possession of their lands without the instrumentality of a “*notice to quit*,” or of any *legalized* process of ejection.

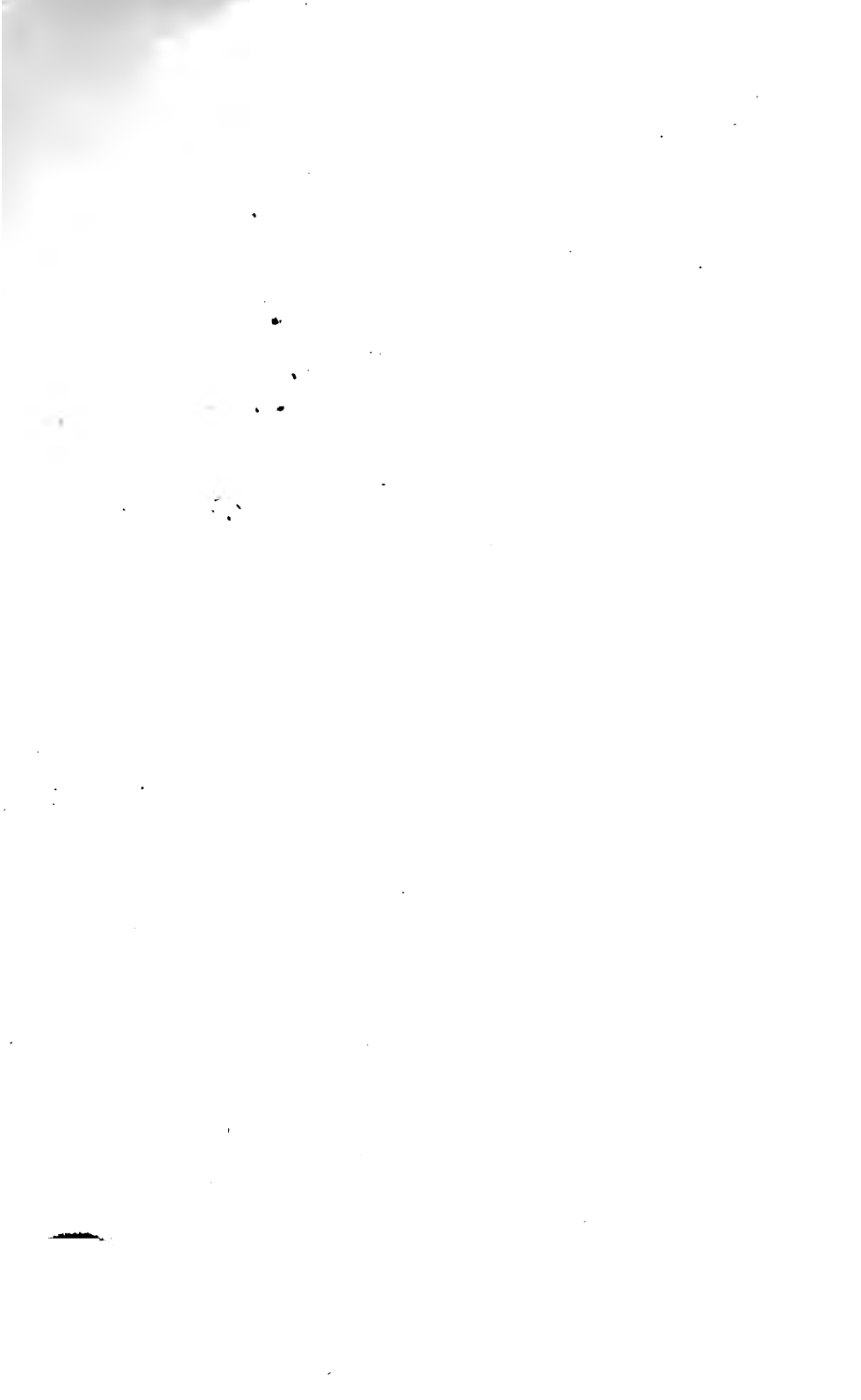
“These facts may perhaps be justified or fairly accounted for, but they are too notorious to be denied. The books of the process-servers of the Assistant-Barrister’s Court, the books of the Clerk of the Peace (particularly those used at the January sessions of 1846 in Ballina), the admission-books of the different workhouses in this county, and the books of the emigration agents at Killala and Sligo, will prove all.

“The condition of the estates of some of those landlords which are at present, in many places, a perfect waste, though it marks the late general calamity, points as significantly to the assisting agency that contributed to complete the ruin. The calamity might have passed away, but the evictor, to leave nothing unharmed or undestroyed, stretched forth his arm, and gave it an impulse and an enduring fatality.

“Ballina, County of Mayo,
February 25th, 1846.”

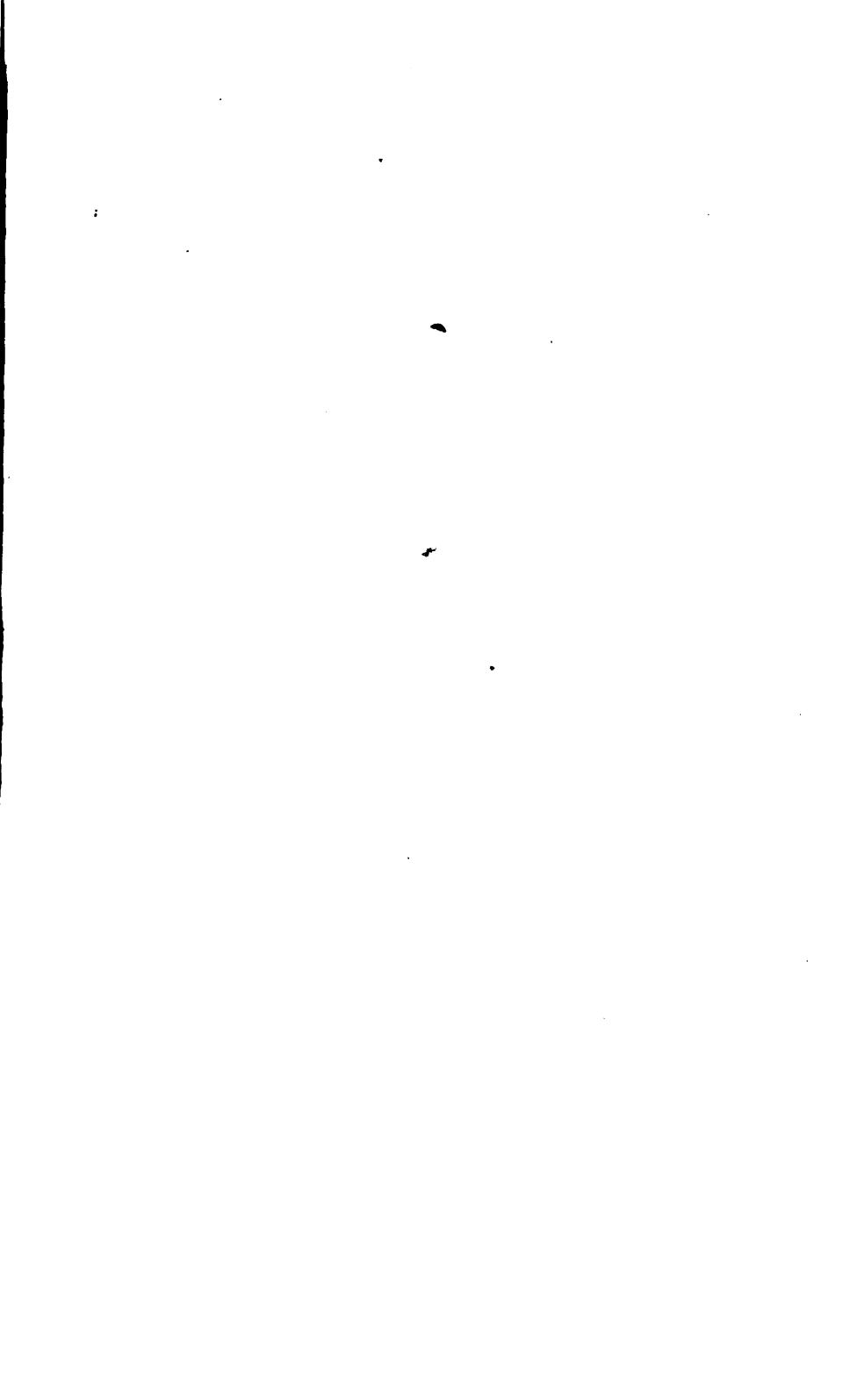














1021

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....



3 2044 021 009 337

THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.

CANCELLED
FEB 3 5 1989
289
AUG 26 1989
BOOK DUE
WIDENER

CANCELLED
MAY 5 1989
2945331
WIDENER
BOOK DUE

CANCELLED
MAY 2 1989
2966208
WIDENER
BOOK DUE

WIDENER
MAY 8 5 2002
BOOK DUE
CANCELLED

